●177

[For the cultural influences on the slave population of Haiti by the white settlers (who are also Haitian), see categories 178 and 563.]

1: Herskovits SV3 Haiti SV3

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[Since the Negro population of Haiti is derived primarily from African stock, data pertinent to the continuation, with modifications, of African cultural traits to fit the Haitian pattern will be found in category 178.]

possible to gain a historical perspective of the valley in which 175
our interest centers. As late as 1702, he tells us, only a few individuals were settled there, and these were mainly hunters and herders, since the policy of that day, based on the official belief that the future of the valley lay in using to the full its grazing resources rather than in the development of agriculture, caused all agricultural activity to be prohibited. Two [177]
decades later, however, when the cultivation of indigo had been successfully introduced, agricultural development proceeded apace. In 1739, in addition to more than a score of indigo-production centers, the valley boasted of numerous coffee, cotton, and cocoa plantations, and by 1789 was a recognized agricultural region.

But for the fact that the great plantations are no longer 241
there, this aspect of life in Mirebalais has been little changed 178
by revolutions and the abolition of slavery. Indigo, of course, has lost its place as an important product, while maize is now among the most significant crops, as might be looked for in the change from a plantation system to one of small individual ownership which was brought about by Haitian independence. But cotton and sugar-cane are still major crops, and coffee, which grows well on the mountainsides, is largely cultivated.

Moreau de St. Mery, writing in 1789, speaks of the French 175
who peopled the valley as "still showing the traits which 648
marked the early colonials. They are good, frank, brave, and opposed to all coercion." In 1723 "they marched with others from the district of the Artibonite" in an uprising against the arbitrary policies of the French West Indies Company, which Charlevoix, one of the first historians of Haiti, so vividly described.[8] In 1729 and 1736 the folk of Mirebalais defended their eastern frontier against attacks by the neighboring Spaniards; eleven years later one hundred and ten of them helped with the defense of the town of St. Louis, which was menaced by the hostile maneuvers of the British admiral

CHAPTER II

WHAT THE SLAVES FOUND IN HAITI

Though by the time of the French Revolution "the immense 175
army of slavery had increased to such proportions that in the 162
face of it the white world seemed reduced to a mere handful of 567
men,"[1] this was by no means the case in the earliest days of the colony of Santo Domingo. As late as 1681 the whites outnumbered the Negroes almost three to one,[2] and it is not until a hundred years later that, in the words of St. Mery, there were "eleven and three tenths slaves for one white."[3]

Yet in the fashioning of the present-day culture of the 178
Haitian peasants, this "mere handful," exerted an influence 567
out of all proportion to its size. That this should have oc- 563
curred is not strange in view of the relationship between Negroes and whites, which was that between slaves and masters; that it did occur is amply shown in the contemporary accounts of Haitian and West Indian life, which tell us how the Negroes everywhere made conscious efforts to achieve the standards of those who to them represented power, wealth,
and position. But while the prestige of the master-class must 177 ●
be acknowledged, care must be taken not to accept uncritically an assumption that has colored many accounts of the lives of primitive peoples who have come into contact with European

[History of Haiti in 17th + 18th Century
The Haitian white population]

177 cultures — namely, that the traditions and beliefs of these groups cannot withstand the impact of what is termed "civilization." What invariably seems to follow when peoples having differing customs, beliefs, and cultural heritages come into continuous contact is that both give, and each takes. What aspects of the new culture a given people will take, and what in turn they will give, must vary according to the particular historical situation under which the contact occurs. But both
178 processes do go on, and, as will be shown in the case of Haiti, though the Negroes retained much of their African culture, they also freely took over and adapted the customs and behavior of the Europeans among whom they lived.

563 Certain questions, therefore, must be asked about this white element in the population. To what extent was it a unit in its derivation and in its special customs — did its members come from a single social class of the home country, or were all elements of French society represented? What were the patterns of family life, of religion, of economic organization, of morals, which the whites presented to Negro eyes? These are matters of great significance, for one telling factor in the mingling of cultures is the type of carrier through whom contact between civilizations is effected. If, for example, European missionaries or traders or administrators on short tenure and without their families are introduced into an area, a far different picture of European life will be presented to the native from that were immigrant settlers to come among them with their wives and children; and this result, moreover, to seek finer distinctions, will show additional divergencies according to the social position of these migrants. Therefore it is necessary to consider the types of Frenchmen whose modes of living were to influence the behavior which the descendants of their slaves were to perpetuate when these had attained their freedom as individuals and their independence as a nation.

175
563 The "Corps of Adventurers" who in 1632 comprised the dominant element in the population of Haiti included four

175 178 tinuation of African cultural traditions was not easy, certain 567 things did persist. While the material facts of the life of the [177] slaves was at once subordinated to European patterns — in dress and implements and to a certain extent in housing, for example[23] — yet in other matters they could live as they had lived in Africa. Thus one account of the time, quoted by 461 de Vassière,[24] tells how the slaves carried on communal hoe- [533] ing, timing their strokes to the rhythms of songs that begged some favor of their visitor, or to songs of praise (and, when the white observer was not present, undoubtedly also singing songs of derision), in the characteristic African fashion that, as will be seen, has survived in Haitian peasant life to this day. Similarly their traditions of cooking, of eating, of fixing the time for their meals (despite St. Mery's comment that " the Negro has no other rule of eating than the demands of his appetite "), of respect for their elders; their attitudes toward death and their rituals of burial, their dances, their songs, and, above all, their non-Christian religious beliefs, all continued to be stamped with the mark of Africa.[25] On the 17 other hand, opportunities to learn and imitate French cus- 567 toms were by no means neglected, for the prestige of the masters filtered through the ranks of the slaves until it reached even the field-hands, for the nearer in service the Negro was to the person of his master, the more Europeanized was his behavior and the prouder he was and the more he exploited his opportunities to follow European patterns of habit.[26] Not only did the house-servants imitate French dances,[27] but we are told how in Martinique, for example, all the slaves were taught these figures.[28] In the field of religion, also, the efforts [799] of the Church to capitalize the royal edicts which made baptism of the slaves compulsory were far from vain, at least in so far as the outward manifestations of their acceptance of the faith were concerned. Writings of the time, however, do not omit comment on the discouragement of the missionizing Fathers who seriously undertook this task, because too often

attitudes of these writers were in the main far from sympathetic 175
toward Haiti, and their interests extended but little 114
to the customs of the great masses of Haitians. That the
fear of slavery was still alive in the early part of the nineteenth [567]
century is apparent from an incident related by Mackenzie;[44]
that, some decades later, the sense of racial differences continued
to exist is evident from folk-sayings about the characteristics
of whites, mulattoes, and Negroes recorded by St.
John.[45] The concept of rank seems to have maintained itself [565]
in its full flavor, with no lack of social classes in Haitian urban
society and no lack of vigor in perpetuating the earlier prejudices
of caste.

The majority of the population remained on the land, for 175
by 1830 the great estates had been completely broken up, and 178
were cultivated in the main by small concessionaires. The [423]
dress of these country inhabitants seems to have remained
much as it had been under French control, and the emphasis
on good manners that so marks African social intercourse had
been retained to such an extent that St. John, no admirer of
the Haitian people, was forced to remark upon it.[46] Markets
which were conducted in African fashion had been established,
and these were supplemented by itinerant peddlers.
The institution of *plaçage,* a reconciliation of African plural [595]
marriage with the monogamy of European custom, of which
more will be said in a later chapter, was known in the early
days of independence. The rites of birth and death were
marked with their special ceremonies, and in both instances it
can be seen that the African elements of the cultural heritage
were not being forgotten. Dancing continued as the principal [535]
form of recreation, and to the traditional dances, which still [177]
persist, were added European styles.[47]

Above all, African religious customs were being observed. 175
Vodun rites continued to flourish and magic was practiced as 178
in the days preceding independence, as is to be seen from the 771
notorious and all too often repeated tale of the "Congo bean 789

241 461 476 made of key-men in the district informally called *chefs d'esquade*. They have the reputation of being those to whose call a number of men, perhaps a dozen, perhaps two or three times that many, will respond and come to give the aid that is desired. Such a person is given a " bouquet " — a bottle of [431] *clairin* — which insures the appearance of himself and his group on the date set. A *combite* may be held at any time during the week except Sundays, which are dedicated to rest, and Tuesdays (in earlier times Mondays), when tradition holds a person must be free to work his own fields and care for tasks needed to be done at his own house. There is no requirement in either law or custom to respond to the call for communal work, and the larger landowners, who usually reside in the towns, rarely participate in a *combite*. So great is the pleasure derived from work of this sort, however, and so living is the realization among the peasantry of its potential benefits, that a man hesitates before he refuses to take part in a *combite* to which he has been summoned. Sometimes a man who has been faithful in his attendance at *combites* and has worked well at them falls ill during the time for planting or for clearing his ground of underbrush or for hoeing. In such case a *combite* is summoned, and even though this man is unable to offer the usual feast, his services are remembered and the men work with a will to insure the proper preparation of his ground.

241 461 476 534 The scene in a field where a large *combite* is at work is an arresting one. The men form a line, with a drummer in front of their hoes. The *simidor,* who leads the singing as he works with the others, adds the rhythm of his song to the regular beats of the drum, thus setting the time for the strokes of the implements wielded by the workers. This drum, slung about [177] the neck of the drummer, is of the European form, never the hollowed-out African type that figures in religious rites. Its sound can carry far, however, and thus it not only beats the time for the hoes, but notifies all concerned that the *combite*

> sitting at the door of the central house, with huts all 175
> around in which his younger wives lived, as they could 595
> not be made to dwell under the same roof. . . . The French priests attempted to alter this state of things, but they did not succeed, as the wives, surrounding the intruders, asked them what was to be their position if the husband selected one among them and abandoned the rest." [10]

Elsewhere St. John speaks of the institution of *plaçage* by [583]
name, mentioning its prevalence prior to the period of his residence in Haiti.[11] Mackenzie, though not calling it by this term, tells of a rural Negro who, in the course of a long conversation during which the name of an officer of rank in the Republic came up, made the observation "with admirable naiveté and exquisite logic, 'C'est mon beau frère, parceque je vis avec sa sœur.'" [12]

Plural marriage is no less common in the valley of Mire- 184
balais than elsewhere in Haiti. Despite the insistence of the 595
Church on monogamy, many men have two "wives," a few have three or four, while one important priest of the *vodun*
cult is said to have eight. The force of the sanctions behind [177]
monogamy and Church unions, however, has undoubtedly [152]
influenced the psychological "set" of the Haitian toward polygyny, as is especially to be seen in the violent manifestations of jealousy shown by co-wives toward one another. It is primarily because of this that polygynous households, such as are mentioned in earlier writings, are not found in present-day Mirebalais, and this also explains why a man with more than one spouse sees to it that where possible his "wives" live at such distance from one another that they have but little opportunity to meet. Even then, on occasion, a newly taken *placée* will pace in front of the house of her man's other spouse, flaunting the clothes and trinkets she has received from him. Or if women who share the same mate meet in the

CHAPTER VII

PROPERTY, WEALTH, AND THE FAMILY

596 The word "family" as employed in Haiti can be understood only in terms of a broader meaning than is given it in Europe and America, where it describes only the most immediate relationship group. Though in Haiti this type of organization, consisting of mother, father, and children, lies at the base of its social structure, the Haitian "family" includes a wide range of relatives, direct and collateral, on the sides of both parents. The immediate family is thus but a part of a larger group, to which it is in many instances subordinate.

611 178 177 It becomes apparent, from even so brief a statement, that Haitian society has not retained that exclusive emphasis on descent in the maternal or the paternal line that characterizes most of the civilizations of Africa. And while a more detailed discussion of the manner in which African and European traditions are combined in Haitian culture must be reserved for later pages, this much may at the moment be made clear: The Africans who peopled Haiti, coming from cultures where descent is counted solely on the side of the mother or the father, and coming into contact with the French, whose custom binds children with equal strength to the families of both parents, molded both traditions into the social forms found

611 today not only in Mirebalais, but, in their essential outlines, [177] throughout the Republic. 178

The larger relationship grouping originates in the immediate family, 596 and the formation of new extended families is a 591 continuing arc. Characteristically, the process begins when a 621 man leaves the habitation of his father and, with his wife, settles on land somewhat remote from the dwellings of either his people or those of his wife. As the sons of this couple grow up and marry, they make their homes near that of their father, so that in time a group of immediate families related in the paternal line clusters about the dwelling of this original settler, forming a habitation. The continuation of the process depends upon the amount of land available to the group; in any event, given enough time, land to permit all the male descendants of the founder to support themselves and their families will be lacking, so that the younger men will repeat the process that has been described, and themselves become the founders of new habitations whose members, with the passing of generations, will eventually be lost to the original group. While land is available, a young man is given several [425] hectares by his father when he marries, and here he establishes his household. If the family have prospered, additional land is bought as more young men grow up, so that the relationship group may become a community of considerable size.

In accordance with this rule of residence, only rarely will a 591 man settle on the property of his wife's parents, since to do so 596 reflects unfavorably on his personal status. When this does [558] occur, it is probably because of a serious quarrel with his own [578] people. In such a case, if his marriage endures, he becomes a [693] quasi-member of his wife's family, but unless he has committed some extremely grave offense, such as publicly insulting or striking a parent or grandparent, he does not forfeit membership in his own group.[1] Similarly, the fact of his having [428] settled away from the habitation of his family does not disinherit him, for, as will be seen, this occurs in but the

SERPENT-WORSHIP IN MIREBALAIS

may perhaps be said to have come to this: Adherents of the African cults refrain from killing the snake, and should they do so by accident, the African custom of giving ceremonial burial to any creature having supernatural importance is followed as an atonement. Where this is omitted, difficulties of so serious a nature are felt to threaten that to prevent them a priest of the cult is called upon to offer up a sacrifice and to beg forgiveness even after the little ceremony of burial has been performed.[7] 184 771 776 825 782 766

Inasmuch as *vodun* flourishes in Mirebalais despite the minor role of serpent-worship, it is evident that in seeking to understand its nature and its philosophy other aspects must be considered. Two historical facts must be kept constantly in mind in making this analysis, for without them, what follows would be meaningless. The first is that *vodun* derives from a background of African theology and ceremonialism. The second is that the Negroes have continuously been subjected to the influence of Catholicism during the centuries that have passed since their introduction into the island. 771 171 177

Yet another point may prove suggestive in providing a useful point of view for an analysis of the *vodun* cult. This bears upon a difficulty impossible and happily unnecessary to resolve in the field study of religion, which arises out of the degree of variation in answers to questions dealing with the same point. These answers differ not only according to the status of the individual in the cult, since layman and priest have understandably different concepts of the functions of deities based on unequal degrees of expert knowledge, but the extent to which an individual has religious interests or is indifferent to them influences the nature of his responses. A fundamental fallacy results from the fact that except where there is an officially sanctioned theology — which makes for dogma, and often for perfunctory worship, in contrast with the living dynamic nature of Haitian peasant belief and ritual — there are no "real" answers to questions in the field of religion. The 184 771

based on the rituals that were observed. In every case at least 78
two major officiants are necessary, the *prêt' savanne* and the 79
hungan, though the role of the latter is the all-important one. Last-minute preparations are made during the final morning, but what is needed will have been accumulated over a period
of many months. Tables to hold offerings — sometimes two, 78
sometimes more — are arranged at the sacred places on the 79
family habitation, usually near streams or great trees where 778
the gods reside. Eggs, cereals, drinks, and cornmeal — the [776]
food of the gods — are brought, and the animals to be sacrificed are tethered near by. Early in the afternoon the family,
dressed in white, assemble, while the *vodun* priest with corn- [532]
meal describes on the ground the cabalistic designs called *verver*, and he sees to it that all has its proper place on the altar, whether it be the ever-present crucifix, or the chromolithographs of the saints, or the bottles of "drink" — usually non-alcoholic — or cereals and flour of various kinds. Consecrated water must be on hand, particularly at the big "altar," as the table covered by a canopy to protect the sacred objects is called.

The first part of the ceremony is an *action de grâce*, which 78
in Mirebalais requires an hour or more, but which is said to 79
last two or three hours in southern Haiti. This ritual, entirely 776
derived from the litany of the Church, must always precede [777]
any *vodun* ceremony of the kind being considered here. Its purpose is said "to set the *loa* in movement" and to notify them of the rites that are to come, but psychologically it also serves to assure the participants that they are not proceeding to the worship of African gods without having paid friendly
homage to God, the ruler of the universe, and the saints. The [533]
songs and prayers are brought to a close by an *adoration*, when offerings of money are made by members of the family to pay the officiant. At this point the songs change to a more African rhythm, and the *vodun* priest takes active charge.

As darkness falls, on the first day of the rite, he summons the

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ABOVE, *A vodun altar: both Catholic and African religious symbols are to be seen.*
BELOW, *Mystical designs traced in cornmeal on the ground about a shrine.*

532

[facing p. 192]

The cult of the dead [3] is to be differentiated from the worship of the *loa* and from the twin cult in that its African form 769 177 has been modified to a far greater extent than these others by the influence of the Catholic Church. Yet, though the modes in which respect is shown the dead are principally those of the Church, the attitudes and beliefs which underlie the cult—the meticulousness with which the tranquillity of the dead is insured, the fear in which they are held, and, above all, their close association with magic as an important sanction behind this force—all these take on a distinctly African tinge. Perhaps the point of view taken toward the dead, and the manner in which the living cope with their power, can best be set forth at the outset by giving a sketch of the pattern of funerary and post-funeral rites, since these form the basis of the entire cult.

Wailing by all present begins with the approach of death. 763 There are cries such as: "*Adieù, bon Dieu, Manman ma-o,* 764 *wai, wai! Jodi-a tel-ei-tel quillé mouwi! Côté m'ap wé li enco'?* —Good-by, O good God, O my mother, *wai, wai!* Today such-and-such a one has died! Where will I see him again?" The members of the family tie white or black kerchiefs about their waists, while others present use kerchiefs of any color at hand. The doors of any *humfort* or *maison de servitude* in the habi- [346] tation are closed, and thorny acacia branches are placed in front of them, so that the dead, who are believed to go about everywhere, cannot "spoil" the sacred place by entering it.

The body is laid in a shallow trench dug in the floor of the 764 room, and there washed and prepared for the funeral by a professional *baigneur des morts*—man or woman according to the sex of the dead—and his assistants. Some member of [754] the family watches them to see that the "three drops" of moisture believed to be in every dead person's mouth are not caught on a cloth when the body is turned over, for they are held to have great potency for the working of black magic, and a sorcerer would give a great deal for them. Cold water, the crossroads, where he alone would have to conduct the 789 brief rite that was necessary to complete the making of this *garde*. As he arrived at his destination — this portion of the description is his — the plate was put down with the *kola* beside it, and *clairin* was poured on the ground. The lighted candles were placed near by, and with arms outstretched, he [539] spoke the following formula:

Au nom de Mait' Carrefour,	In the name of the Master of the Crossroads,
Voici un couvert sec deposé jodi-a, Lundi.	Here is an offering placed today, Monday.
Au nom de Mait' Gran' Bra,	In the name of the Master of the Great Forest,
Ce couvert est pou' vous.	This offering is for you.
Mait' Carrefou', pour garde moin, sorti pou' 'ou.	Master of the Crossroads, for [the sake of] my charm, which comes from you.
Moin mandé pou' gardé	I ask that you protect me
Nan tout ces moin capab' trouvé moin	In all I may encounter
Pou' bien, nan pou' mal.	Of good, and of evil.

Before leaving the crossroads, the maker of the *garde* touched [788] the plate and bottles three times to earth, calling the names of Master of the Crossroads, Master of the Great Forest, and Master of the Cemetery.

While the nature and forms of good magic that have been 789 thus far discussed show a characteristic African pattern, the 177 presence of the factor of medieval European magic is evident, though this is not as sharply identifiable here as in the functioning of the less pleasant aspects of these supernatural powers. That this merging of two traditions is fundamental in all Haitian magical practice must nevertheless be patent to all who have had experience with it, unless in their intentness on

789 177 esoteric African survivals they have been blinded to the European elements.[5] It was, as a matter of fact, well-nigh impossible to discuss magic, whether good or evil, with a native for any length of time without hearing the names of three pamphlets published in Paris, *Le Grand Albert*, *Le Petit Albert*, and *La Poule Noire*. So portentous do the folk of Mirebalais hold the information contained in these works — though actually, when read, their contents are found to include nothing more dangerous than names of the proper roots and herbs with which to concoct a love-potion, or, far more frequently, magic for preventing wine from turning to vinegar, or for enabling one to gentle a wild colt — that their importation into Haiti is said to be prohibited by law, a statement which was not checked except in so far as inquiries for the pamphlets in Port-au-Prince bookstores proved in vain. The contents of these works on magic differ but little from those of a document written in Créole, said by Seabrook, who reprinted it, to have come from the files of the Marine Corps, where it was deposited after having been taken during the rebellion of 1918–20 from the body of a fallen Caco chief known to have been a *bocor*.[6] The source of inspiration of a large number of these formulas and of many of their objectives is obviously in such European pamphlets.[7]

789 754 Turning now from the more passive, protective, and socially desirable forms of magic, a similar analysis may be made of its aggressive, destructive, and antisocial manifestations. That magic of this latter sort is much feared is a truism; yet that the fear of it goes as far or is as constant as most accounts of its workings state may be marked as gross exaggeration. For just as the practitioner of good magic knows how to bring about evil, so for every force that harms there is a cure, and for every *wanga* there is a *garde*.

754 776 177 The malignant powers in the world of the Haitian are, like other phases of his life, of both European and African derivation. From Europe he has taken the *démon* and the associated

term *loup-garou,* or werewolf. From Africa has come the con- 754
cept of the *baka,* though this he has merged with that of the 776
démon, and all operate through the power of Lucifer and the 177
Devil, conceived as two separate beings. In addition, as will be [775]
seen, the cult of the dead also contributes to this system, since
the *loa* who rule the cemeteries are indispensable for the prac-
tice of magic, as it bears especially on the concept of *zombi,*
concerning which so much has been made in recent years.

The evil *loups-garous* are women whose real nature is re- [826]
vealed by their red eyes, though some hold that they have a
black spot in the corner of the eye. Another word less fre-
quently heard to designate the *loup-garou* is the Dahomean
term *azeto,* employed in Africa for witches and vampires, a
concept which in Haiti has become merged with that of the
werewolf.[8] The *loup-garou,* with her male counterpart, the
démon, is empowered by the *bocor.* As might be expected, she
is greatly feared, and should an old woman suspected of being 789
one of them come to a house, someone will see to it that in an 754
adjoining room two brooms are crossed as the woman's name 776
is pronounced three times, so that if she is actually a *loup-
garou,* she cannot escape.[9] Children in particular carry
counter-charms both against these women and against de-
mons; one such, for a woman with child, has been mentioned
in an earlier chapter,[10] and the making of another *garde* of this
type has just been described. With a charm of this kind " you
can leave at midnight for Port-au-Prince [instead of waiting
for dawn] and fear nothing. You may meet a band of horned
demons carrying candles in their hands, but they will stand
aside and let you pass."

In Mirebalais, *baka* are usually mentioned when these evil 776
beings are discussed, particularly since it is in connection with 787
them that the term *engagement* is most often heard. An *en-* 754
gagement, which is more feared than a *wanga,* the word usu-
ally encountered in the literature when evil magic is under
discussion, designates a pledge made by a person, usually to

[P.250 is blank]

CHAPTER XIII

AFRICA AND EUROPE IN HAITIAN LIFE

With the historical background of Haitian culture and its 121
present-day organization in mind, we may now seek to disentangle the varied sources from which the institutions described in the preceding pages have been derived. The formalized expressions of religion will be treated in the chapter which follows; here the manner in which Europe and Africa have determined the forms of other phases of Haitian peasant life will be analyzed.

Even such a simple aspect of peasant life as the house, or 342
caille, as it is termed, furnishes an illustration of this inter- 171
mingling of cultures. In the countryside the typical dwelling is a rectangular structure of two rooms with a thatched gabled roof and walls of woven withes daubed with mud.[1] The rectangular floor plan and the roof are of West African type, but since both of these are also familiar in Europe, the house thus probably represents the coalescence of two dwelling forms which were originally not strikingly unlike each other. The type of thatching is purely African, as is the wall construction, for walls of twilled withes can be seen in West
Africa today. On the other hand, what there is of furniture is 352
entirely European. The African stool has given way to the 177

352 177 European straight chair, and if peasants often sleep on mats
● laid on the ground in African fashion, this is only because
342 their resources do not permit them the luxury of beds. The
accessory field-house is called an *ajupa,* a designation which
represents one of the few recognizable contributions of the
aboriginal inhabitants of the island to its present-day culture,
since, according to Charlevoix,[3] it was first applied to the huts
of the buccaneers, called by them *aioupas,* a name taken over
from the Spaniards, who themselves had adapted it from the
native Indian term.

291 Clothing is also of European style. The men, who wear
177 shirt and trousers, long ago discarded the West African loincloth
and the covering great-cloth worn toga-fashion, while
the hats they wear are of course equally of European type.
The absence of shoes, though characteristic of Africa, is not
necessarily of significance, for shoes are not only an accepted
article of dress, but are symbols of worldliness, and when
lacking from the costume, indicate only an inability to purchase
them. The dress of women is no less European, though
only the old women continue the fashions of the days of St.
John, who reported that "the females generally keep to a
long white chemise, covered over with a blue cotton dress that
reaches to their bare feet, and is drawn in around the waist."[4]
As in his time, white is favored for days of festivity, and the
head-kerchief is also seen, even if it is less omnipresent than
in his day. The younger women who count themselves sophisticated
scorn the kerchiefs and wear hats, but elderly
women wind white kerchiefs about their heads in the West
[793] African manner. The invariable mark of the *mambu,* in addition
to her jeweled fingers, is the white kerchief with a very
large straw hat worn over it.

292 One special form of dress that represents a complex merging
177 of European and African secular and religious customs is the
996 *rade de pénitence.* For men this takes the form of a multicolored
shirt, for women a dress whose colors are dictated by

the *loa*. In one instance a man wore a red shirt with black 292
crosses appliquéd on it; dresses of this type worn by women or 177
children are made of cotton cloth, pieced together patchwork- 776
quilt fashion, of either three, seven, seventeen, or twenty-one different colors or patterns, with reds, blues, and white predominating. These garments are worn for a specified time, also named by the *loa*. The term *pénitence* has been taken from Church terminology, and the motivating sanction derives equally from African and Christian concepts;[4] for example, the wearing of the garment is a compliment to the African deities represented by the colors, while the various rules about abstinence during its term of wearing is the European pattern of "penitence."

The elaborate cicatrizations, or raised designs made by 304
scarifying the body, which marked the slaves newly arrived 789
from Africa have quite disappeared, but a few scars can be 178
discerned on the body or arms of a man by a practiced eye. These represent an African carry-over in the form of a *garde* applied by the injection of some magically endowed substance into a cut which thereafter gives what may be thought of as a kind of spiritual inoculation. African fashions of hair- 307
tying have been retained by the women almost unchanged, 178
and, as in Africa, hair-braiding is a highly developed art, so that the styles in which hair can be braided seem innumerable. This is particularly true of dressing the hair of small girls, whose heads are decorated with braids going the length of the skull, or dividing the scalp into small squares, each with its tuft of hair, or by a part in the middle with lines going at right angles from it across the head. These styles of braiding are not named as in other parts of the New World and in Africa, but the tradition of intricate braiding has lost none of its vigor.

The implements of the Haitian are both of European and 412
African derivation. The ubiquitous machete, a saber-like tool 177
employed in all manner of ways, from chopping down trees [439]

412 to cutting fruit, though seen in Africa, was probably intro-
177 duced there by the early traders, and all machetes found
[439] today in Haiti are imported from Europe or America. The
same is true of the hoe, for the short-handled, broad-bladed
West African hoe has given way to the European long-handled
type, though the blade of the Haitian hoe is somewhat broader
241 than that used in America and Europe. Despite the presence
17 of domesticated animals to draw the plow, this implement has
[407] never gained favor in Haiti, nor have recent efforts to teach
the Haitian peasant the use of the plow achieved any degree
of success. He prefers his African mode of cultivation, to say
which implies more than just the employment of a certain
implement, since even such matters as the manner in which
he employs his hands and feet in the process of planting
are included. When the Dahomean plants, for example, he
holds a calabash of seed under his left arm, from which he
takes the grains with his right hand. As he moves down the
rows of newly turned earth, he makes a depression with the
heel of his right foot, drops a few grains into this depression
and, replacing the earth with his toes, takes a step so that he
can repeat the process with his left foot. This is exactly the
manner in which Haitians were observed planting in the val-
[462] ley of Mirebalais.[8] Unlike the usage in Africa, however —
where the men clear the ground, the men and women plant,
[177] and the women tend the growing crops — the European pat-
tern, which places agriculture in all its essential phases in the
hands of men, has been taken over almost in its entirety.

252 The women have retained almost without change the Afri-
178 can modes of preparing food. Grain is first pounded in an
177 African-like mortar, with an aboriginal type of pestle, while
[412] the shelled kernels are winnowed in a large round basketry
tray. The cooking is either done on a raised mud platform
in the cooking shelter, as in West Africa, or on three stones,
employed as rests for the pots, a method equally characteristic
of Africa. In the Haitian cuisine the prevalence of stews, of

In the Haitian cuisine the prevalence of stews, of dishes fried in deep fat, of the generous use of pepper in seasoning, are all African, as are even the names of certain dishes, such as *acansan*, a Nigerian-Dahomean term which designates the cooked balls of cornmeal. One of the few European intrusions is white bread, while the cassava cakes, also important in native diet, derive from the aboriginal Indian inhabitants. 252 262 [171] [177]●

In its outward forms the economic system under which the Haitian peasant lives seems entirely based upon European pecuniary patterns. Money follows the French system, even to the official use of the French designation, *centimes,* for the smallest parts of the principal unit of currency, the *gourde.* Both paper money and coins are used, and as the result of the Marine occupation American money is as well known as the currency of the country itself. Buying and selling goes on in the accepted European manner, the price of such export crops as cotton, sugar-cane, and coffee responding to the fluctuations of the world market. In many of its inner aspects also, the values of the Haitian are influenced by the money economy taken over from Europe and America. 436 177 433

The conclusion that the economy of Africa has been swept aside by that of Europe needs, nevertheless, to be qualified if certain historical and psychological factors are not to be ignored. It must not be forgotten that in West Africa, long before the period of European contact, a monetary system based on the cowrie shell had been fully developed. The prestige of wealth, the resulting drive to obtain property, the pursuits of buying and selling, and other aspects of a pecuniary civilization were as current in West Africa at the time of slaving, and continue today, as in Europe or in Haiti. When some of the attitudes associated with the economic life are analyzed, it is no simple matter, therefore, to state whether they stem from African or European sources, or both.

One pattern common to both economies, the validation of position through the conspicuous display of resources, has 556 177

556 [177] been largely lost in the peasant culture, possibly because of a prudence dictated by conditions of life wherein evidences of the possession of wealth — certainly in the case of a peasant — were an invitation to those who would despoil him. Only when a family of position gives a ceremony, or when one of its members is married or dies, is the lavishness of its preparations such as to suggest the importance of its place in the community. This does not hold for the individual. Personal [626] ostentation is the more strongly inhibited by the belief that [177] another's envy may bring ill fortune to the one against whom it is directed. In Mirebalais it has almost become a byword that the really substantial citizens look as though they were the poorest. This tradition in no way interferes with the preoccupation with adding to one's possessions, or with the desire to exert the power and enjoy the position that go with a command of large resources, or the will to pass on as large an inheritance as possible to children. In their origin, such drives [177] can be ascribed neither to Europe nor to Africa, nor, for that [178] matter, to the experiences of slavery, but rather to the interplay of two homologous patterns of culture that has produced the economic system and the economic motivations found in Haiti today.

423 In the matter of land tenure, and in attitudes toward pri- 177 vate property, African tradition has disintegrated almost com- [178] pletely. Under the characteristic West African form of land tenure, land of a tribe is vested in the tribal head, who allots it to families for use. Trespass upon it is not permitted while it is under active cultivation, and the produce of the land is the property of the one who has worked it. Only palm trees are privately owned by those who have planted them; otherwise land that goes uncultivated for a longer period than is necessary to restore its fertility may be re-allotted. In some regions land worked by an individual is his because of his membership in a large relationship group, whose ownership derives from the power of its ancestors who had lived on this

443 case certain aspects of the historical development of Haiti
171 have doubtless tended to reinforce African custom. Reference
178 has been made to the fact that the great proportion of traders
are women, a truism in Africa as in Haiti, where by general
rule men are the producers and women the distributors of
[202] goods. In Haiti, however, the fact that for many decades men
were likely to be arbitrarily impressed into military service by
local chieftains when they came to town — particularly in
Mirebalais, which had always been one of the centers of Caco
activity — discouraged them from attending the markets.
Thus African usage has here been reinforced by the historical
443 fact of Haitian political instability. The fact that the proceeds
434 from trading belong to the woman who does the trading, and
562 that in consequence women are encountered who, though
178 married, command independent means and exercise full con-
171 trol over their resources, is a carry-over of African tradition
and, as in Africa, this gives to women a position in the eco-
nomic world quite foreign to conventional European practice.

59 The form of the family as found in Mirebalais demonstrates
611 that the African social grouping which comprises all those de-
178 scended on one side of the family has largely disappeared
[171] there, though it is possible that at least the vestiges of it may
have survived in other regions of Haiti. Yet in West Africa,
though descent is legally counted on but one side of the
family, psychological adherence to the families of both par-
[177] ents is everywhere important. Therefore it is logical to assume
that this concept, reinforced by the pattern of dual descent
and double familial affiliation of the French, has been re-
tained in Haiti to the neglect of the aboriginal larger group-
ings, where, as has been seen, not only is relationship counted
on both sides of the family, but, more significantly, the right
to reprimand and punish is held and exerted by elders in both
the maternal and the paternal lines. On the other hand, it is
apparent that the feeling for larger relationship groups has
not been entirely lost, particularly in the paternal line, when

769 a *mangé* is given, and that evening, when the feast ends, dances
17 are held. Two or three *tonnelles* are provided, the most important
of these being the one where the Martinique cycle, the social dances most beloved by the ancestors, is danced. In one of the remaining two a European *bal* is held, and in the other are the *vodun* dancers. Thus even in connection with a commemorative Church mass for the dead the *mangé morts* and the dancing of African dances are included.

595 The institution of plural marriage, which is socially recog-
177 nized though not legally sanctioned, is obviously African.
178 Though the *placée* is held in respect and her place in society
[554] carries no reproach for herself or her children because of any
connotation of immorality, it is of significance for an understanding of the manner of cultural change that prestige in marriage goes with the monogamic union blessed by the Church, and that the " wife " — the woman who is addressed as " Madame " — holds definitely higher social position than the *placée*. Officially the Haitian State is in accord with the position of the Church and recognizes only the European monogamic marriage. Socially, however, African plural marriage is not only tolerated but accepted as a matter of course, and in those instances where plural marriage takes on its most exuberant form, as when men of position have as many as six or seven *placées* in addition to a legal wife, its very size tends to give such a family group, or at least its head, the enviable esteem of his fellow-citizens.

17 Within the family, the deference toward older members
[593] and the duties and attitudes toward parents-in-law are Afri-
[606] can both in form and in spirit. The exaction of guarantees
[583] from a young man before marriage, and the necessity of his
proving to the family of his fiancée that he can support her, are perhaps in their generalized form universals, but as found in Haiti show once more a retention of specific aboriginal
[584] traditions. On the other hand, such aspects of marriage as the
formal *lettre de demand* sent when a match is arranged, or the

especially by the drummers. Experience among other Caribbean 533 Negro cultures and in Africa itself has failed to reveal 535 greater skill in calling forth intricate rhythms from batteries [171] of drums than can be found at any Haitian religious gathering. The enthusiasm with which a man takes his place at a drum, the manner in which he loses himself in his drumming, the skill with which he maintains the time of his complex beats in common with two other drummers and those who manipulate the rattles and the iron, bespeak long training and a passionate devotion to the art. The same is true of dancing. The best drummer, the finest dancer, hold positions of esteem [554] in the community, and on occasion their fame will go beyond the valley, an occurrence as unusual as it is valued. The excellence 533 of the drumming and dancing and the concomitant 535 artistry in song can be understood when one considers the age 868 at which training is begun in these arts. At Mirebalais an infant of no more than two years has been seen to dance creditably, while a young boy of six gave a demonstration of drumming that spoke eloquently of his promise as a drummer of talent. Before every *vodun* dance the boys take over the drums while the younger girls dance to their rhythms. They are watched with a critical eye by their elders, who from time to time correct them or praise those who do well.

The accompanying musical forms are almost entirely African 533 177 in their rhythmic structure, but European influence is 178 traceable in their melodic line, which varies from unchanged European folk-melodies to purely African songs. In the use of the falsetto, however, in the statement of a theme by a leader and its repetition by a chorus, and in the countless modulations introduced into the song, the singing is entirely African, as are the postures struck by those singing.

The importance of the dance is apparent from the large 535 range of dances. 177 Of *vodun* dances there are the *avalou*, or *yanvalou*, 178 a word meaning supplication in the speech of Whydah; 796 the specialized steps for the various Rada and Pétro gods; for

535 177 178 [096] *magic* and for the Congo, Ibo, and Nago *loa;* the *mazon,* as an interlude dance between possessions; and steps of the *asagwe,* or salute to the gods. There is also the Martinique cycle of secular dances, including the *zesse, callebasse,* and *banda;* the *rara* dances found only at Easter time, and the social Congo dances. Finally European dancing, called *bal,* is performed to the sound of a drum, a phonograph record, or a small orchestra. With a qualified exception of the last, the type of dancing in all these is African. The essence of style in these dances lies in the manipulation of feet and the muscles of the body, particularly those of shoulders, hips, and buttocks, the patterns of which have been carried over in their entirety from the aboriginal homeland. For men and women to dance with arms about each other, as do Europeans, is still regarded in Mirebalais as immoral.

538 178 The trait of African culture that has survived most tenaciously in all the New World, even where European influence has been strongest, is that of folk-literature — of tales, proverbs, and riddles.[7] Though these have flourished in Haiti as elsewhere, prolonged story-telling sessions, so characteristic of other Negro groups, were not encountered in Mirebalais. It is likely that this is principally a seasonal phenomenon, and the failure to find long evenings of story-telling during the summer months, when the rains are at their height and work in the fields is hardest, may properly be an expression of this seasonal variation. As elsewhere in Negro societies, tales and riddles are told at wakes, though their enjoyment by children and their function as a part of the education of the child are as important as in Africa itself. The familiar types of African animal stories and the tales of human tricksters and magicians are well known, and well told. The figure who corresponds to Br'er Rabbit, or to the spider Anansi, is the little 'Ti Malice, while the foil for his pranks is the great awkward Bouki.[8]

One folkloristic element that gives Haitian life a strong African flavor is the proverb, which, as elsewhere in Negro

cultures, is used not only to point morals for the young but as 538
an expression of the characteristically oblique forms of Negro 178
expression in a quarrel, or in sounding a warning, or in commenting acidly on some social situation. A famous proverb, 539
quoted from the earliest days, is today heard often in Mireba- 538
lais: "*Zafai' mouton pas zafai' cabrit* — The affairs of the 178
sheep are not the affairs of the goat" — an injunction against gossip. When a person boasts that no one can harm him, the reply may come: "It is on a narrow path that one has to deal with a difficult horse." Should a man dismiss an experience as of but little consequence to him, he may hear the comment: "Often one pays an ox for a goat." When one person does harm to another, his victim may warn him with the phrase: "Behind the mountains are other mountains." If a man whose fortunes are flourishing attempts to console another who has suffered misfortune, or a rich man jibes at a poor one, the retort may be: "The rock under the water doesn't know how the rock in the sun suffers." To such an extent do proverbs comment on all aspects of life that almost no extended conversation occurs without them. Some of these are of European origin, but both numerically and in their use their character is preponderantly African, as is shown by their specific correspondence to proverbs used today in the regions from which the Negroes of Haiti were derived.*

In the practice of magic, and more especially of black magic, 789
it has been noted that African and European traditions have 178
combined into an integrated cultural unit. The outward ex- 177
pression of magic in the charm or "fetish" as an aspect of 754
African life is so obvious that it has been commented on by all observers. In Haiti, though the charms are not prominently displayed and personal charms especially are worn beneath the clothing, this concept of their importance in coping with life has been retained. Yet, as has been seen, Haitian magic is not African alone. For while the forces behind protective magic are primarily the *loa*, and those behind black magic are

789 754 177 178 the powers that control the souls of the dead and those creatures of evil whose powers come from Satan — all this being African enough, in the sense that evil magic exists in Africa as elsewhere — the point, which bears repetition, is that the primary sanctions for evil magic have been reinforced by the books of magic handed down from medieval Europe.

789 177 178 In this system, however, not only do European books of magic figure, but the Church also has its place. "The things of the Church are always affairs of magic," remarked one Haitian, meaning that they are best adapted to this purpose and are used when the opportunity is had. It is for this reason that great care is taken to keep all sacred objects in churches from the hands of unauthorized persons. To have something that has come from a church, such as a bit of a priest's robe or a few splinters from the statue of a saint, enlists the power of these on behalf of any objective that the maker of magic has in view, and invests any *garde* made with these with the power of God Himself. Thus the twofold meaning of the proverb:
[539] "*Vrai maré corde, vrai wanga, c'est l'Eglise* — The real tying of the cord, the true *wanga*, is the Church," or, similarly: "*Vrai hungan c'est l'Église* — The true *hungan* is the
[754] Church." However, whether it be through such African-like practices as the use of colored cloth, or caolin, or the tying of knots, or whether objects filched from the sanctuary of the church be employed, evil magic, derived alike from African and European sources, continues as a potent force of Haitian peasant life. For perhaps in magic more than in any other aspect of his culture has the peasant achieved a synthesis of the two currents that have contributed to his civilization. He has taken from both, and inasmuch as both adhere to a more general pattern which marks all the Old World, neither tradition has had to give way to the other.

nected with them, much of African tradition which has car- 178
ried over into Haitian religious life has been retained in pure 771
form. Yet the intrusion of Catholic custom into these African 776
patterns—often noted, though generally in passing—also 177 ●
must be studied if the significance of the forms of Haitian folk- 771
religion is to be grasped. That this aspect of *vodun* has re- 794
ceived the scant attention it has had is probably to be ascribed to two causes.[1] The first takes the Catholic element for granted, so that even where a particularly dramatic element of Catholic practice is seen in an African setting, such as a crucifix or the portraits of the saints on a *vodun* altar, specific mention is made of this without attempting to dissect its historic or psychological role. The second reason for the comparative disregard of Catholic influence is that for Europeans it is a commonplace. Spirit possession and sacrifices, African song and drum rhythms are more "exciting" than prayers or hymns of the Church. Underlying both these causes is the deep-rooted and unquestioned assumption that, in contact with any non-European culture, the patterns that govern European behavior must prevail. Consequently, is it not in the nature of things that Catholicism should have taken root in the *vodun* cult? Is not rather the matter to be stressed that African traditions should have been retained at all? That the process should actually have been one of amalgamation rather than of dominance is rarely taken into account. Yet to go deeper into the significance of this process in Haitian life is to open far-reaching vistas.

An outstanding sanction taken by the *vodun* cult from 177
Catholicism is that of the baptismal rites. Though ceremonies 771
of consecration are a commonplace in Africa, and the African 794
ritual of washing the head—*lavé tête*, as it is termed—has 788
not been forgotten, in Mirebalais the importance of baptism 778
as a means whereby human beings obtain their place in this world and in the next has been carried over and applied to all matters of ceremonial significance. Thus just as in the lives of

177 793 794 788 776 the saints of the Church the sacrament of baptism was a crucial rite, so the *loa* must be baptized before they become forces which act in a recognized and predictable manner. Just as the objects used in the rituals of the Church must be sanctified by being blessed and sprinkled with holy water, so in the *vodun* cult a *humfort*, the drums, the iron, and the rattle must all undergo a similar sanctification, not only that they may possess proper supernatural power, but more importantly that they may perform their functions in the very serious and African matter of calling the *loa* and placating the supernatural beings of the *vodun* cult.

177 793 794 788 Herein lies the importance of the *prêt' savanne*. Since the official representatives of the Church not only have nothing to do with the *vodun* cult, but excoriate it on all occasions, the *prêt' savanne*, as a man who can read the prayers of the Church, plays an indispensable role and to that extent is to be regarded as a functioning member of the *vodun* cult, despite the fact that he has no control over the *loa* and, as far as was observed, does not participate actively in their worship. At the same time, it must not be inferred that in borrowing " baptism " from the Church this rite has been elevated to the most important place in the ritual of the *vodun* cult, for though the *prêt' savanne* must read prayers " from the book " and sprinkle his holy water, the actual " baptizing " is carried out by the *hungan*. [778] In sanctifying a *humfort*, the end in view is to induce the *loa* to come after the baptism and to insure that no unaccountable or untoward deeds may come to pass within it. Similarly, though drums must be baptized with Church prayers and holy water that they may perform their allotted tasks, without the concomitant ritual of the *hungan* they would be no more empowered to call the gods than they were before the prayers of the Church were read over them. An analogous comparison can be made between the role of the *prêt' savanne* and that of the *hungan* in the *service*. Since the world

is ruled by God, it is necessary to invoke God with the ritual of 177
His Church before the rites to placate the *loa* may begin. But 793
the important business of the occasion is to placate the *loa*, and 794
it is only when the *hungan* takes over from the *prêt' savanne* 788
that the series of rituals commence which, for the Haitian, hold emotional force and psychological value.

In the description of the baptism of a *loa* given in a preced- 534
ing chapter, the use of Church ritual in bringing the African 782
spirits under control will be remembered. No clearer illustra- 778
tion can be given of this merging of traditions than in a de- [777]
tailed account of the manner of making and validating *vodun* drums. These drums are of the characteristic African hollow-log type, with skin heads held in place and tuned by means of pegs, which are tied fast about the drumhead with cord. Before the tree which furnished the bodies was cut, an invocation was pronounced by their maker and an offering — a *mangé sec* — was made, that all the gods might come when called by the finished drums. A candle was lighted and *verver* described about the base of the tree. Eggs, broken against the trunk, were rubbed on the bark; while both soft and alcoholic drinks were given as libations, since not all the gods desire the same re-
freshment. After the tree had been felled and that part of the [322]
trunk that was needed for the drums was cut off, the maker was free to proceed with shaping the bodies of the drums by first gouging out the inside of the trunk, then stripping the bark, and finally carving the characteristic foot at the base. Before the next step of boring the holes for the pegs was taken, *clairin* was poured inside each drum, at the entrance to the habitation of the maker, and toward the man's cornfield. The first hole bored in each drum was carefully marked, for this was the significant *manman*. Here the first peg is inserted; the skin head is first attached here; and here the cord about the head is first knotted; while it is the peg in this hole that must always be first struck when the completed drum is tuned.

for all uses to which those of their type are put. During their 534
making and after their completion they had been sanctified 776 788
by rites that vividly illustrate the merging of traditions in [777]
Haitian religion: by means of offerings to the African gods,
and through baptism by the rites of the Church.[*]

The *action de grâce* is another integral part of *vodun* cere- 776
monialism that is essentially Catholic, since its lengthy service 777
is composed entirely of prayers and hymns of the Church. As 778
has been shown, the *action de grâce*, which precedes a *vodun service*, takes place before an "altar" which, important both then and at the later, more African rites, in itself documents in no small measure the combining of Catholicism and *vodun*. One, employed at a *service* not described in the earlier chapters, was covered with a red and white checked table-cloth, on
top of which a smaller white cloth was spread.* Pinned to the [358
canopy and to the front of the table-cloth were various chro- 776]
molithographs of the saints; St. Michael attacking the Devil, Mater Dolorosa, St. James, the Virgin Mary and Jesus (the Assumption), and St. Expeditius. In front of the representation of St. James stood a crucifix with the figure of Jesus, in accordance with the custom of never omitting to have one of these at any *vodun* ceremonial. The table bore many offerings; at the back were four bottles of soft drinks, with cups; while also to be seen were several hard rolls, an ear of corn, a dish containing eggs, and another holding, among other things, rice. One of the containers on the table held holy water, while candles for use both in the *action de grâce* and in the later *vodun* rituals lay beside this. Thus crucifix, candles, pictures of the saints, and holy water were combined in this ceremony with offerings of food and drink to be given the
gods that the ancestors had brought from Africa.[*] The songs
sung at the voduistic portions of these *services* also reflect [538
the psychological unity of Catholic and African elements in 539]
vodun worship. One of these declares:

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* This altar is shown in the illustration facing p. [illegible].

796		
797	*Je crois en Dieu,*	I believe in God,
778	*Oui, Santa Maria.*	Yes, St. Mary.
583	*Santa Maria,*	St. Mary,
539	*Qui sorte nan Guinée.*	Who came from Guinea.
	Je crois en Dieu,	I believe in God,
	Oui, Santa Maria.	Yes, St. Mary.

Another for the Virgin of Allada, sung in Leogane, is as follows:

Santa Maria la Madaleine,	St. Mary Magdalene
Prié pou' loa yo.	Pray for their *loa.*
O Allada-e,	O Allada-e,
Sonné une sonne pou' moin,	Ring a bell for me,
Pour m'allé.	So I may go.
M'dit, Allada-o,	I say, Allada-o,
Sonné une sonne	Ring a bell
Pou' les pitites nagé.	For the drowned children.

353 Of these elements, the portraits of the saints, or *images,*
778 offer one of the most vivid instances of the mingling of Afri-
776 can and European elements in Haitian belief, for they are
171 the outward symbol of the psychological reconciliation that
177 has been effected between the saints of the Church and the
African deities. This is nothing peculiar to Haiti alone. In West Africa, wherever Catholicism has obtained something of a foothold, certain pagan deities are regularly identified with saints of the Church, and the same phenomenon is found in Cuba [8] and Brazil.[9] This identification of saints with the *loa,* whether initiated as a ruse against the detection of African worship or emanating from a reasoned analogy, would seem in Haiti, at least, to act as a device to achieve an adjustment between two conflicting systems by emphasizing the resemblance between Catholic saints and African nature deities.
353 778 776 177 The importance of the *images* as symbolizing the reconcilia-

tion is consequently of the first order, while the presence of 353
these chromolithographs in every Haitian hut and on the 778
altars of *vodun* ceremonies indicates how deeply the accept- 776
ance of this identification has gone. In the house occupied in 177
Mirebalais during this investigation, the following *images*
were found on the wall:

Moses
St. Augustine
Our Lady of Mount Carmel
St. Peter the Apostle
St. Michael
St. Clara
Baptism of Christ
Peter and Paul

It is perhaps worth mentioning that the owner of the house, when renting it, stipulated that these *images* were to remain in place, for their power kept the house, its contents and occupants from harm.

No greater concurrence of opinion is had in the designations 776
of saints given to corresponding *loa* than in any other facet of 177
Haitian belief. Those here listed were obtained in two ways: either the equivalents of *loa* were named in the course of discussions with priests and other members of the *vodun* cult, or the *images* themselves were shown to members of the cult, and the names of the corresponding *loa* were recorded. Mater Dolorosa is held by most persons to be Gran' Erzilie, but in one instance this figure was equated with Erzilie Freda Dahomey with the insistent qualification that the two were not the same *loa*. The saint is represented as richly clothed, wearing many rings and necklaces and surrounded by other evidences of great wealth, so that the correspondence arises from the fact that Erzilie is held to be the richest of the *loa*. Notre Dame d'Alta Gracia is related to the *loa* Kpanyol, or the Spanish *loa*, while Notre Dame de Grâce is the water-goddess

776 known as La Sirène. St. Anne and St. Philomena are also re-
177 garded as water-deities, the first being Adamisil Wedo, the second the *loa* Christalline, a strong evil spirit dwelling in the sea. With one exception, Legba was held the equivalent of St. Anthony; in this other instance his similarity to St. Peter was stressed. St. Peter is held by most persons to be the *loa* St. Pierre, though this again is disputed, *loa* St. Pierre being believed by some to be the spirit who validates the sacred polished stone axes which in Haiti, as in Africa, are called "thunder stones." The identity of St. Andrew was also disputed, some saying he is Simbi, others that he is Azaka Mede, a river god whose name is clearly derived from that of the stream across which, it is believed in Dahomey, all dead must pass. One person identified Aizan with Christ, but this would seem to be a conclusion personal to him.

Of the Ogun *loa*, St. James is conceived as Ogun Ferraille. St. Joseph is identified with Ogun Balandjo, because this *loa* is a healer, and St. Joseph is shown holding a child, his hand upraised in blessing. St. Patrick, on whose *image* serpents appear, is correlated with Damballa Wedo Tokan, or simply the rainbow serpent Damballa Wedo, while Moses, because of the miracle he performed before Pharaoh, is held to be the father of Damballa. St. Expeditius is Agwe, and St. Anthony the Hermit either 'Ti Jean Pétro or Simbi en Deux Eaux. St. Louis, the patron saint of Mirebalais, is a *loa* Wangol, as are two of the kings who figure in the adoration of the Christ-child, Balthazar and Gaspar. The *marasa*, logically enough, are believed the same as the twin saints, Cosmas and Damien, while the "protector of the *marasa*" is St. Nicholas, because the several children on his *image* are interpreted as *marasa*, *dosu*, and their succeeding siblings.[7]

The Haitian often carries this matter further, either conceiving saints as themselves powerful *loa*, or creating "saints" for himself out of the forces of nature or other powers in the universe. The most outstanding example in the former category is St. John the Baptist, worshipped as *loa* St. Jean Baptiste, who sends the thunder and lightning. The power and irresponsibility which characterize him contrast strangely with the gentle child holding a lamb, shown on the *image*. The connection becomes apparent in the light of African mythology, however, where the ram is the emblem of the god of thunder, while following this same belief lambs are sacrificed to St. Jean Baptiste in Haiti. The following myth is told of him: 776 777 [539]

> On a given day of the year God permits each saint to have control over the universe. St. John the Baptist, however, is so irresponsible, and his rage so violent, that God fears the consequences if he were allowed to exert his power on his day. By plying him with drink the day before, he is therefore made so drunk that when he falls asleep he does not awaken for five days. When he is told his day has already passed, his rage is so terrible that great storms flay the earth, and it is a commonplace in Mirebalais that this day is marked by thunder and lightning storms of almost hurricane proportions. Though he can do some damage, his power is now limited, however, to his own sphere.

In the second category are the forces of nature personified and worshipped as saints. Among those specifically named were St. Soleil (St. Sun), St. la Lune (St. Moon), Sts. Étoiles (St. Stars), and St. la Terre (St. Earth). [821] Even more striking is the concept that the power capable of bringing reverses is to be worshipped, as a copy of an *oraison* to St. Bouleversé which was obtained clearly shows: 776 777 539

> St. Bouleversé, you who have the power to overturn the earth, you are a saint and I am a sinner. I invoke you, and I take you for my patron from today onward. I send you to seek out such-and-such a one; overturn his head,

177 776 534

> overturn his memory, overturn his thought, overturn his house, overturn for me my enemies visible and invisible; cause the thunder and the tempest to break them into pieces. And in honor of St. Bouleversé, three Paters and three Ave Marias. . . .[8]

771 179 796

Thus it is seen how Catholicism invades the beliefs and rites of the *vodun* cult. In an analogous fashion *vodun* has not failed to make itself felt in certain festivals of the Church,[9] for while elements of *vodun*, rigidly suppressed inside the Catholic churches, are absent except in so far as they can be carried on surreptitiously, they are nevertheless integral parts of these fêtes in the minds of the folk who make pilgrimages to them. So arresting is the resulting mingling of practices, and so significant for the amalgamation of cultures that has taken place in Haiti, that a detailed discussion will be given of the most prominent instance of this type, the festival in honor of the Virgin of the Palms, which takes place each year on July fifteenth at Ville-Bonheur, or, as it is better known, at Saut d'Eau. The festival of 1926 has been described by Price-Mars;[10] here certain observations made during the fête of 1934 may be given, especially as they have to do with those aspects of the mythology which validate the festival, and as they illustrate the non-Catholic, voduistic phases of the celebration, of importance for the points being considered in this chapter.

778 179 787 [776] [538]

Beside the church, Ville-Bonheur has three especially sacred spots, St. John, En bas Palmes, and Saut d'Eau — the falls themselves. At St. John is a large *campêche* tree surrounded by many palms, from beneath which flow streams of water. St. John is said to have appeared here, carrying his scepter as in the chromolithographs, and at that time water began to flow in the sacred springs, and except for one short period has continued ever since as holy water, being used for drinking and bathing, but never for purposes of cooking. The priests

stationed near by did not at first believe in this miracle, until 778
after several appearances of the saint the higher authorities 177
of the Church gave the fête their sanction. Many tales are re- 787
counted of skeptics who, though coming to scoff, became filled with awe when they put foot in the holy place and — significantly for the merging of the two religions — were possessed by *loa* for the first time. A church which has since burned and a small chapel were erected at the site which now is the entrance to the enclosure before the present church. This is the old calvary enlarged, and here the statue of the Virgin, saved when the earlier church burned, is found. Next to this church are the uncompleted walls of the structure which is to be a new and larger church. It is said, however, that this edifice has given much trouble, for each time the walls reach a certain height they fall. The people say: "The Virgin does not like this place," and believe that a simpler church should be built where the old one stood.

The vision of the Virgin at En bas Palmes is believed to 778
have occurred several times, most recently as placed by a lively 173
tradition in the days of the American Marine occupation, 177
when a priest is said to have caused both St. John and En bas 787
Palmes to be closed for several years because, as at present, 776
many who prayed at the church also took occasion to worship their *loa*.

> During the fête, however, the tale goes, the Virgin appeared on a palm tree. The people, on their knees worshipping, sent to the priest to come and pray. He declared it merely superstition, however, and called an American Marine captain stationed at Mirebalais to help him suppress this worship. The captain ordered a Haitian sergeant to shoot the vision, but the Virgin merely moved to another tree; another shot, and she moved again. They cut down the tree, and those who looked on with terror saw the vision slowly ascend to the sky. As the priest

778 turned to leave, word came that his house had burned
776 and nothing in it was saved. Later he suffered a paralytic
173 stroke from which he never recovered. Some say that the
177 American captain became ill and was sent to the States
"as a punishment for what he had done." Several days
787 later the sergeant was found mad, wandering in the woods. Since he had fired under orders, however, his punishment was but temporary, and on being cured he returned to Ville-Bonheur to ask pardon of the Virgin. Today he lives in Mirebalais. When they saw the American ill, the priest paralyzed, the sergeant mad, and the presbytery burned, "public clamor" became so strong that both St. John and En bas Palmes were reopened.[11]

778 In 1932 a cyclone at St. John tore down trees and houses and
731 hurt but did not kill the worshippers who had gathered there.
177 An eyewitness insisted he had seen the enormous whirling cloud rise from the sacred place. He had no time to reach his house, for with a noise like a cannon-shot the whirlwind came, and an enormous oak tree fell just behind him — "I saw death staring at me." Today he carries two scapularies to the Virgin to protect him.

778 The third sacred spot is at the falls themselves, where the
796 grandeur and beauty of the scene is such as to induce the re-
789 ligious thrill almost unaided, and where great numbers go in
177 the course of their pilgrimage to Ville-Bonheur. There are
[788] two falls, situated at a distance of several miles from the village, one for Damballa and one for Aida Wedo, and it is believed that those who bathe in the sacred streams become possessed. It is said that the palms near by are sacred to the Virgin, but others hold that they are for Damballa. Many visit the falls on the day preceding the fête, but the largest throng hurries there immediately after the principal mass, when the greatest number of possessions and the most violent seizures by the *loa* occur. The falls, therefore, in association

The falls, therefore, in association with the purely Catholic rituals carried on at the village 778
church, are seen to hold an important if unofficial place in the 796
complex of rites known in the Haitian Church calendar as 177 ●
the Fête of Saut d'Eau.

During the two or three days preceding the fête and on the 778
fifteenth of July itself, an air of great gayety not unlike the 796
carnival spirit accompanying European Church festivals per- 78
vades the surrounding country. Camions traverse the almost 177 (794)
impassable side road, bringing crowds of people from Port-au-Prince, from the Dominican border, and even from the north, who throng the streets and the shrines and tramp the miles from the village to the waterfalls or visit the nearer sacred sites of St. John's Wood and En bas Palmes, to light candles and ask the satisfaction of their needs. Like the falls themselves, these spots by their very beauty awaken a sense of emotional awareness, and it is not strange that here, as at the falls, many possessions occur. At night, in particular, the great trees with their interlacing serpent-like roots, the gaping earth which at En bas Palmes is witness to the uprooting of the palm trees where the miracle occurred, and the stream of sacred water, all make a scene of indescribable eeriness, heightened by the flickering candles given as offerings, and the open lamps of those who stay the night here to fulfill their vows.

In the town itself gambling and other games go on, and 796
dances of all kinds are held at night, among them *vodun* and 787
bal, though at these public dances no possessions are counte- 177
nanced. One of the most colorful aspects of the scene is the 524
penitants, wearing clothing of varied colors in fulfillment of 525
a request by the *loa* they worship or an obligation to them. 535
Such folk are not permitted in church unless the clothing 782
which marks them is covered by ordinary dress, but they walk 292
the streets, often possessed and often using their power to heal 755
those whom they encounter. Possessions by Ogun, by Gede, by Baron Samedi, by Damballa, by Erzilie and other *vodun* deities were observed, particularly at the shrines, where their devotees prophesied and healed the sick.

000 796 782 776 177 devotees prophesied and healed the sick. Even at the church, however, where all go to offer the prayers that are the central observance of the fête; the many candles placed on the rocks at the entrance are usually for St. Anthony; that same St. Anthony who, it will be recalled, is the *loa* named Legba, the guardian of all entrances.

771 177 It is obvious, from the examples given, that the world view held by the Haitian and the motivations which underlie Haitian life cannot be understood unless both the Catholic and the *vodun* contributions to them are held in mind. But certain further questions bearing upon the effect of these two influences present themselves. What proportion of Haitians hold membership in the Church, and how many are affiliated with the *vodun* sect? What attitudes are manifested toward the Church and its priests as contrasted with their attitude toward the *loa* and their ministrants? How does the Church meet the challenge of *vodun*? And how does the Haitian peasant, in his inner life, reconcile these two conflicting forces?

[784] The impression gained from reading available works on Haiti is that voduists and Catholics constitute two distinct groups. While this may obtain in some parts of the Republic, it is not true either in Mirebalais or in those other portions of Haiti which came under direct though brief observation in the course of this study. All discussions with natives that began with the assumption of the existence of two such separate groups led to confusion, and statements which had seemed evasions were not clarified until the incorrectness of such an assumption became apparent. Thus when it was stated that in all Haiti the Pater Noster was one of the first things taught every child, the question: " Is this not true for Catholic families only? " was met with a vigorous denial that was slowly justified as the realization grew that, if not true for all Haitians, such an assertion was certainly valid for the vast majority of them in Mirebalais and probably elsewhere.[12] The identity of membership in the two groups became apparent from ob-

servation when, for example, the baptismal rites which received into the Church the children of known active participants in *vodun* ceremonies were witnessed. It became even more convincing when experience taught that the best place to encounter an elusive *hungan* or *mambu* was at early Sunday-morning mass. Only when it was realized that no dichotomy exists in Mirebalais between Catholicism and *vodun*, but that both are necessary if all the supernatural beings that control man and man's destiny are properly to be worshipped, was a true perspective obtained.[13] 771 177

There are certain Protestant sects which have been increasingly successful in making converts among the Haitian people, particularly in the north, whose adherents stand in strong hostility to *vodun*. A type of Protestantism that has had the best reception is one comparable to the "shouting" sects of the United States and the British West Indies, where the appeal through patterns of possession, dancing, and other aspects of ritual close to the familiar African forms of behavior is evident and relatively little psychological shift is needed to make membership in such a church acceptable.[14] The Protestant church in Mirebalais, however, is more sober. It commands only a very small proportion of the townspeople, and draws even fewer from the surrounding countryside, while the Catholic voduists look upon it with a scorn that is exemplified in the answer to a question about the ritual of Protestant funerals: "*Moun chita, chanté zhymnes*—People sit, and sing hymns!" Two or three well-substantiated cases of conversion to Protestantism came about because, despite the sacrifices made to the inherited *loa* and the prayers to the saints, these individuals continued to experience ill fortune, until in desperation the Protestant minister had been called to banish the family *loa*, to cut down the sacred trees on the family habitation, and to destroy the house of worship, with the objects in it. These deeds of "desecration" were, however, followed by no renewed disasters, and while from the point of view of 797 798

797 the voduists this is not regarded as decisive proof of the power
798 of Protestantism, for those immediately concerned it is held sufficient.[15]

771 What, then, of the attitudes held by voduists toward the
● 177 Catholic Church? The correlation of Catholic ritual with
vodun practice made by Haitians is of utmost significance in this connection. In discussing the Church service, it was pointed out that church bells announce mass or any other rite, and this, it was explained, is for Legba — "*Toute cloche c'est pou' Legba, même l'église, oui* — All sounding of bells is for Legba, even in church," for he must be notified so that he can "open the gate" for God, Jesus Christ, and the saints. "*Nou' même nou' connai' ça. C'est Bon Dieu crée tout* — You yourself know that. It is God who created everything." It was also recounted how when the priest preaches, he is possessed by the *mystères* of the sacred Trinity, for does he not gesticulate and become excited like any other possessed person?

Furthermore, it is believed that Gede, Ogun, and Damballa "are always at the church," often insisting that their worshippers take communion. Indeed, occasionally the *loa* of a woman may demand a Church marriage from a man to whom she is a *placée*. The sacraments of baptism, first communion, marriage, confession, and extreme unction are received by members of the *vodun* cult, though, as will be seen, when voduists
[793] confess, they say nothing of their *loa*. The *hungans* them-
[788] selves "are most often at the sacred table to take communion," and one particular *hungan* not only attended mass, but was seen continually employing his rosary in the *vodun* cere-
[184] monies at which he officiated. While Haitians from the south-
[793] ern peninsula stated that the *hungans* there do not go to church, it was pointed out at the same time that all other voduists attend regularly.

779 The principal resentment held by Mirebalais voduists
798 against the Church is for the cost of Church rites, and for the

779 Today the Church takes full advantage of its status as the only recognized religious organization in
798 Haiti to dictate the official position of government toward *vodun*. Permission for *vodun* dances and for *services* must be obtained from the officer commanding the local detachment of the Garde d'Haiti, and this is not always granted. Penalties
[688] for illicit dances and ceremonies are severe, and because gossip is ubiquitous and no man lacks enemies, apprehension is prompt. Thus in the instance of one *service*, a misunderstanding regarding the permit was sufficient to cause the detention for some hours of the one responsible for the rite.

771 Is it possible, then, for a person to be a communicant of the
178 Church and partake of the sacrament without feeling this
177 weight of spiritual and official disapprobation? More particularly, is it possible for him to omit from his confession all allusion to his worship of " false " gods? It is here that one encounters a singularly tenacious survival of African traditional belief. In Africa the conquest of one people by another meant the mutual interchange and acceptance of the respective deities. The conquerors added to their own pantheons the gods of those whom they had overcome so that these forces might not wreak a supernatural vengeance upon them; while to the conquered the power of the gods of those who had defeated them was self-evident. If the worship of the Christian God and of the saints of the Church intruded on the aboriginal religious patterns of the Negroes brought to Haiti, the acceptance of such worship did not imply rejection of the old gods. Nor does membership in the Church today mean such complete acquiescence in its doctrines and pronouncements that the worshipper of the *loa* will offer himself for the malediction of the priest by confessing his adherence to their cult. The situation somewhat parallels that in Africa itself, where the first effort of Protestant missionaries is directed toward inducing their converts to abjure polygyny. This dictum is complied with readily enough on the surface, so that a man will have but one wife — in one village! In Haiti the

problem of confession is met in the manner explained by a 771
woman who is a devotee of the *loa:* "The *loa* are not the 778
things of the priest. Why should I tell him about them? If I come and take this book of yours, it isn't mine, and I am a thief. If the priest tells me I must not worship my *loa*, they are not his *loa*, and he cannot take them from me. Does anyone expect me to come and tell him that my father, my mother, my sisters and brothers, and all my family serve the *loa?*"

For the Haitian, therefore, the forces of the universe are under dual control. And though, as has been stated when the cosmology of the system of *vodun* worship was discussed, he may reconcile this duality, yet in practice he must observe the rites of his *loa* separately; he must pray to God and the saints apart. His reconciliations he keeps to himself, and in his everyday life both the African beliefs and those of the Church have their place. No better illustration of this could be had than in the incident of the white cock named for the serpent-god Damballa, that had been spared until the final day of this field-work when, as the last of a large brood, his time had come to be killed for the table of his owner. On this afternoon, when he was "to meet his destiny," the cook took him up quietly. A number of feathers were plucked from him, and then, as the sharp knife, describing a cross, ended his life, the whispered phrase could just be heard: "*Damballa, je crois en Dieu* — Damballa, I believe in God."

154 rites for him, despite his strict Catholic upbringing. His vacillation between the desire to understand and worship the gods of his ancestors and his utter remorse after he had done this illustrates one way in which conflicts in a cultural setting can affect the outward responses and unsettle the inner adjustment of the individual who is exposed to such a situation. From a broader point of view, such an analysis of Haitian psychology suggests a more realistic understanding of the individuals in other cultures who have likewise fallen heir to conflicting traditions.

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182 However revealing this type of analysis of the springs of Haitian behavior may prove, it will be adding only a fragment of esoteric information unless it, like all other aspects of the investigation of this single society and its mode of life, is pointed toward an understanding of the larger problems of the relation between man and his culture. For just as a study of the effect of the dual character of Haitian behavior upon the personality of the Haitians is important in throwing light on the study of the relationship between culture and personality in general, so the study of Haitian institutions may hold equal significance when questions are raised about the less subjective aspects of human civilization — that is, when attempts are made to understand what may be termed the dynamics of culture.

177 Most important in this connection is the demonstration made in this book how cultures in contact influence each other. This would seem self-evident but for the fact that very generally when such a proposition has been stated, it rarely enters into the actual studies of primitive cultures in contact with European civilizations without being neutralized by a counter-assumption that the force of European achievement overwhelms peoples with a differing cultural heritage. As will be seen, the failure to recognize this fact of the reciprocal effects of cultural contacts has entered to a very significant degree into the determination of basic atti-

tudes governing Negro-white relationships in this country at 177
the present time.

Haiti has experienced as long and perhaps as intensive a 177
degree of exposure to European influences as any area where 178
non-Europeans have lived in contact with European patterns of life. It has, in addition, completely passed through initial and secondary periods of contact into a state where the social milieu represents more than a century of consolidation of the original influences. Yet the Haitian Negro has by no means been overwhelmed by European tradition, just as he has not retained his aboriginal African heritage without any change. The process is seen to be one of selection, of working over, of revamping and recombining the elements of the contributing cultures, with the result that the ensuing combinations, though of recognizable derivation, differ from their aboriginal forms.

More problems of general interest are also pointed and illustrated by the material from Haiti. One assumption often made in viewing the course of cultural change is that the intangible aspects of a culture are less prone to give way before foreign influences than are its technological and economic aspects. The "natural" conservatism of religion and social organization is often particularly stressed in contrast with the relatively greater tendency to change shown by tools and weapons; clothing, housing, and utensils of various sorts. And though such assertions have some basis in fact, as both our own culture and the cultures of numerous other folk show, yet in the material on Haiti it is clear that neither in technology nor in economic organization have the traditions of Europe entirely prevailed over those of Africa, nor are they in any sense absent in the fields of social organization, religion, music, and dancing. It would seem that while a certain hospitality to European concepts and customs is apparent, there has at the same time been a retention of African modes of life in all sectors of Haitian culture to a degree which

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178 suggests that generalizations as to the relative pliability of any specific phases of a culture under exposure to another are premature.

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178 Are women more conservative than men in respect to cultural change? The appropriateness of the affirmative answer often given can be tested to advantage in studies such as this. The answer, in Haiti, would seem to be that where work at home shields women from the influences of the outer world, this conservatism is found, but where they have an opportunity to come into contact with new trends, no less change enters into their activities than into that of the men. Thus in such matters as the organization of the Haitian household, the cuisine, or the time of meals, the logic of the situation has caused women to preserve Africanisms in full vigor, while historical causes have also similarly aided them in such things as retaining their African role as traders in the markets. In other phases of their lives, however, women, like men, have accepted European patterns, as is evidenced in the field of religion, where no greater resistance has been shown by women toward new forms than by men.

182 Other examples might be cited, but these indicate how a culture such as that of Haiti, as regards both its inner values and the psychological responses made to them, and its outer form and the manner in which its present-day character was attained, aids in sharpening and clarifying the questions that must be asked and answered if a better grasp of the dynamics of custom and the way in which tradition plays upon the inner being of those who are its carriers is to be had. However, it is not alone in general considerations such as these that the study of Haitian life can be of use. Much that is perplexing in that particular facet of the problem of race which in America is termed the "Negro problem" has both analogy and contrast in Haitian life. It must not be forgotten that the slaves who were brought to continental America were of the same types and of the same background as those imported

570 Africa remains? That this has the widest currency needs no explanation, nor, again, that it is held as true by Negroes as by whites. Indeed, any demonstration to the contrary invariably meets with remonstrance, while indications that Africanisms have even invaded white patterns of behavior are received with incredulity. This reaction is understandable enough if it is referred to the other belief already mentioned concerning the "savage" nature of aboriginal Negro background. Yet despite popular acceptance, despite "scientific" pronouncements that Negro music, Negro speech, Negro games, and Negro folk-beliefs stem from European sources, the student who is equipped with a background of African custom and West Indian practice can see the essential unsoundness of such claims. Cultures do not entirely give way one before another, even where the one was carried by slaves and the other by masters; even though the one is separated from its source by thousands of miles and hundreds of years, and the other derives a continuous renewal of vitality from constant contact with its original home. Once again reference [177] to Haiti is to be made: to the fact that in economic life, in [178] social organization, in religion, in music and dance, Africa has not disappeared, nor, at the same time, have the influences from France failed to stamp themselves on present-day behavior. Cannot the same be said of all areas of the New World where Negroes are gathered in great numbers?[3]

These questions can only be raised here; their answer is the matter of long years of patient investigation yet ahead. But may it not be true that the Negro in the United States has preserved some vestiges of his aboriginal heritage even in outward institutionalized forms; that in his attitudes, points of view, and characteristic responses to social situations the factors of his dual heritage have not been entirely lost; and, as would follow elsewhere as it has followed in Haiti, that this may be reflected in his resulting personality types? Even the possibility of affirmative answers strongly suggests that further in-

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CHAPTER XI

[1] Compare Parsons (I), 173–4, where the cult of twins is discussed and some of its rites described.

[2] Price-Mars (I), 35, mentions this as a power believed to be held by twins.

[3] The phrase "cult of the dead" as employed here must be sharply differentiated from its misuse by Seabrook (82 ff.).

[4] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 34.

[5] Price-Mars (I), 34, speaks of the custom of always burying charms with the dead.

[6] Wakes have been described by Seabrook, 89–91, and others, but in such a manner that it is difficult to dissect out the reality of what was witnessed from the imaginative elements.

[7] Cf. Wirkus, 221–3. The custom of giving the dead food at the grave, which he describes, is not followed when burial occurs in the Mirebalais town cemetery, nor, seemingly, elsewhere in the valley. [784] [184] [769] [114]

[8] See the description of a commemorative rite for the dead in Price-Mars (I) 148–50. [764]

[9] This is a rule followed in West African practice.

CHAPTER XII

[1] An interesting attempt to account for this is found in St. John, 230–1, where he speaks of the "two Vaudoux sects," one good and one evil.

[2] St. Mery, i, 36. The term *garde* is almost entirely absent in later writings, the more sensational *wanga* (*ouanga*) being preferred.

[3] Léger, 55, note 34.

[4] Cf. Dorsainvil (I), 171.

[5] No better summary of this could be had than that in Parsons (I), 179, written after a single séance with a *gangan*.

[6] Pp. 324–31.

[7] Mr. J. C. Trevor informs me that during a recent field-trip to the Virgin Islands he discovered books of magic in common use, obtained from a Chicago dealer. [171] [177] [789]

[8] It is not without interest to note that in the case reported in a Port-au-Prince newspaper and reproduced in facsimile by Seabrook, 334, concerning a woman from the commune of Mirebalais accused of sorcery, the name of the woman was *Azéman*.

[9] Cf. Parsons (II), 596.

[10] See above, pp. 94–5.

[11] The closest correspondence [177] [776]

[P. 8]

2. Man and the Universe: Vodoun

175 When the African slaves stepped ashore in the New World they brought
● 177 with them highly developed religious beliefs and attitudes toward life.
771 But Africa was a continent of many cultures and nations, and its belief
systems varied. The Congo African did not have the same view of the
natural and supernatural as the Senegalese, for example; and even neighboring peoples such as the Ibos, the Yorubas, and the Mahis did not have
common religious traditions. Yet in the strange new land that was Haiti,
the common elements in their religious beliefs were accented. In time a
new composite religious system emerged. It was called Vodoun.

175 The preponderance of Africans in Haiti came from the region of Da-
167 homey, Togoland, Nigeria, and the Congo River basin. Among them the
177 Dahomeans were the most numerous, and it was they who provided the
771 framework for the Afro-Haitian religious system.

The word Vodoun itself is Dahomean in origin. Among the Fon-speak-
192 ing people of West Africa it signified "spirit," or "deity." In Haiti the
word came to be applied in a general sense to all the activities of cult life,
from the ritual of the "temple" to the songs and dances, though in some
old songs it still applies specifically to the idea of a supernatural spirit.
However, the Congo word *loa* came to be used to designate the deities.[1]

771 In a literal sense, Vodoun in Haiti consists of the rites, beliefs, and prac-
794 tices of the Vodoun cult, built around the similar religious systems of the
177 Dahomeans and the Nagos. In a wider sense it applies to similar but distinct ritual activities of other cults. The Ibo-Kanga rites and dances are in a specific sense "not quite" Vodoun. The rites in the Congo-Guinée cult group—made up of Congo, Bambarra, "Guinée," and miscellaneous elements—have separate practices and deities of their own, and are often regarded as not Vodoun at all. Yet the term Vodoun is used in a generic sense to include all these rites, and examination of the beliefs and activities of these cult groups shows that they have drawn in considerable measure upon a common inheritance.

[1] [See Courlander, Haiti Singing, p. 7. Cf. P. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]

782 In Haiti the possession takes many forms, according to the nature of
the deity who has entered the body, and depending on whether the pos-
sessed person has learned to "control" that deity. The possessing, or
"mounting," of the possessed individual is manifest proof of the loa's
existence and his constant proximity. Vodoun is built upon the premise
[771] of the existence of loa, and the possession is the instrument of direct con-
[776] tact and of constant proof of the loa's imminence.

771 Although much of Vodoun is cast in the Dahomean mold, it is no
178 longer what it was originally in Dahomey. Many of the original deities
776 of the Dahomean Earth pantheon, the Sky pantheon, and the Thunder
pantheon have survived. Others have been forgotten, but in their place
there has grown a vast array of loa, recruited partly from the Yoruba
deities and perhaps from deities of other West African tribes. By far the
largest group has come into existence in Haiti—loa whose names, at least,
probably would go unrecognized in West Africa.

177 There have been prolific intrusions into Vodoun from the rites of the
793 Catholic Church, though they have not affected the general framework
771 of the system. The original Dahomean supreme being, Nananbuluku, is
776 nearly forgotten; in her place the Christian God is named in many a Vo-
doun service. Yet, though God is the supreme creator, giver, and taker, it
771 is the loa who must be supplicated and mollified. Most important Vodoun
793 rituals are begun under the supervision of the *prêt' savane*, or "bush
797 priest," who leads off with brief prayers from the Catholic rites. While
177 the Catholic Church itself rejects any direct part in Vodoun, the self-
175 tutored prêt' savane, unordained and unsponsored by the Church, brings
elements of its theology into the hounfor. The origins of the prêt' savane
are not clear. But there is little doubt that his place in Haitian life became
assured during the years of conflict between postrevolutionary gov-
ernments and the Church of Rome. After the slave revolts of 1791, the
priests of the French colony fled from the scene or went into hiding along
with the other white colonists. From the date of Haitian independence
throughout the following half century, Haiti was "in open schism from
the Roman Catholic Church."[A] Some Haitian presidents were friendly
toward the Catholic Church; others even had the objective of making
Catholicism a state religion with the president at its head. Henry Chris-
[659] tophe, for example, made the Catholic Church official but stipulated that
ecclesiastical decrees must be approved by the president. Alexandre Pé-
tion's constitution for southern Haiti (the country was divided) also
established the Church as official but laid upon it strong restrictions.

125 Leyburn points out that in 1814 there were in Christophe's kingdom
653 only three priests, one of whom Christophe had named archbishop. Dur-
793

[A] [Leyburn, The Haitian People, p. 119. Cf. p. 349, Category 116. -- Analyst]

ing Boyer's administration, 1818–1843, Catholicism was the state religion 175 793 [659]
but the president was its chief. Leyburn notes:

> Every effort of the state failing to provide proper religious leadership, Boyer resigned himself to permitting those who professed to be priests to practice in the republic. There were seventy so-called priests in the country in 1840. Some of them had once been in the holy orders but had been unfrocked: they found in Haiti not only a haven but a fertile field for gain. In addition to these religious renegades came adventurers who knew just enough of ritual and theology to use the priestly garb as a cover for easy graft. . . . They baptized houses, boats, and doorposts, and blessed fetish charms or amulets, all for a fee.[8]

It was not until 1860, after the death of the "Emperor" Soulouque, that 175 659
Haiti signed a concordat with the Roman Church.

The role of the prêt' savane became defined after the slave revolts of 175 793
1791. His cue was taken from the activities of freebooting Europeans who apparently needed neither religious orders nor profound Catholic knowledge for their pseudo-clerical work. And the long period without a responsible priesthood gave the "bush priest" an opportunity to flourish.

The prêt' savane of today has a respected place in the community, 793 177 [554]
though his prestige is not so great as that of the houngan on the one hand or the Catholic priest on the other. His place is guaranteed by his ability to bring to the Vodoun service elements of a competing system which the houngan, operating within the framework of African tradition, does not provide. Acceptance of these Catholic elements as a peripheral part of Vodoun is characteristic of much West African religious thinking, in which new deities and rituals may be added to the old when circumstances require.

The prêt' savane opens many Vodoun services with an *action de grâce*, 793 78
reads prayers when a death has occurred, participates in marriage rites, and "baptizes" the hounfor, the cult drums, and the sacred rattles—not to mention the loa themselves! But it is the houngan's powers that are paramount. The "bush priest" is in a sense performing a service for the Vodoun priest, whose rituals and administrations are regarded as the effective and vital ones. The prêt' savane is a cultural afterthought.

In certain remote and isolated mountain places the prêt' savane is virtually unknown. But there is no sense of deprivation, for the cult priests [184]
—even the poorest and the most rustic—have their own way of dealing with the saints, God, and the forces of nature. An aged houngan of the Morne la Selle region explained it this way:

"In everything that is done, God's permission is asked first. Most houngans in the mountains do not know how to read, and they don't know how to pray. But they know many things. They know where the sun rises, They know where the sun rises,

793 78 1177 3761 and they address St. Nicholas, who opens the day, and they know the wish of God. In the name of St. Nicholas they raise a glass of water and ask God for the power to do."

794 184 78 In ordinary usage the Haitian refers to the various cults or "nations" as though they were quite separate and mutually exclusive. He speaks of the *service* Pétro, or *rite* Nago, or the *nanchon* Ibo. Yet in practice the cults are usually bound together into two or three major groups.

The "nations" belonging to the Vodoun (or Dahomey) group include the Arada or Dahomé, the Anago, the Mahi, the Amine, and the Ibo. There is ample evidence that the cults of these "nations" were once separate and apart. Even today in isolated regions of Haiti there are cult centers devoted exclusively to Nago deities. Elsewhere, Mahi or Ibo services are held without the intrusion of "foreign" rites and deities. Some cult centers have several hounfors—one for Dahomé, one for Nago, one for Ibo, and so on, with a separate building for the "dead" spirit Gèdé. More often, however, one finds a single hounfor containing separate altars. Of all the "nations" within the Vodoun group, the Ibo perhaps has the most independent status, and in some regions it is tied in with Pétro rather than Vodoun rites.

The Pétro group also includes numerous "nations," some completely absorbed, others more loosely affiliated. Within this group, which for convenience may be called the Congo-Guinée family, are the Pétro, Bumba, Moundongue, Bambarra, Congo Loangue (Loango), and other "nations." In certain regions the Congo cult, like the Ibo, is regarded as separate and apart. Sometimes the Pétro service is kept distinct from the others, though it has drawn so heavily on them for its roster of deities that the distinction is not easily seen. In places such as Port-au-Prince where the cults have deeply infiltrated one another, major differences between the Vodoun and Congo-Guinée rites have disappeared, and altars to both Pétro and Dahomé deities may be found within the same hounfor.

It is not difficult to detect a certain pattern of regional grouping within the Vodoun and Congo-Guinée families. Within the Vodoun family are gathered "nations" from Dahomey, Togoland, and Nigeria, while in the Congo-Guinée cycle are "nations" from Central Africa, miscellaneous "nations" such as the Bambarra, and the Pétro cult which is regarded as "Haitian" rather than "African," but whose rites and loa have been recruited in large measure from other services.

One often hears of Kitta services, or Chango services, or Legba rites. These are not separate cults but simply rituals for specific loa.

776 one. Sometimes a loa who is making life too hard for a devotee will be
789 retired without a replacement. The "washing of the head" must be accompanied by ritual safeguards, and all possible circumstances must be
[828] taken into account by the officiating cult priest. There are many stories of people who became mentally deranged as a result of the removal of their loa from their heads.

776 The mait' tête must also be removed from the head of a person who dies.
764 Should this not be done, the spirit of the deceased will go to reside "below
[775] the water" and may cause trouble for the family. This loa is usually transferred to a special jar as a temporary resting place, and later perhaps into the head of another member of the family.

776 Though the loa is a powerful ruling force in the life of the individual,
787 the human "horse" has controls over his deity too. He may reproach or
789 admonish his loa for bad behavior or for failing to protect him. He may expose the loa's irresponsibility in public through the use of songs in religious rites. And though the loa is frequently encouraged to "enter," steps may be taken to restrain him from possession. This is called *marré loa* —"tying the loa." A woman may "tie" her loa by fixing a hairpin in her hair in a special way. A man may do it by placing his hands in cold water.[8]

776 Nevertheless, the loa are always lurking in the background. They are a constant and dramatic element in the religious life of the people. They may sometimes be controlled by the houngan, but they are an authority stronger than the priesthood. They give advice, courage, consolation, and status to their followers. They add much to an otherwise hard and ungenerous environment and evoke remembrances of Africa from which
[152] the Haitians' ancestors were uprooted. They can also cause concern and anxiety; for the loa are not always benevolent, and they are frequently unpredictable.

776 Many of the loa are ancient deities, sib-founders and ancestors who loom
171 out of a misty, half-forgotten past. Nananbouclou, Legba, and Ayida Wèdo have been known for many lifetimes in Dahomey. Chango, Ogoun, and Loko were old spirits in Nigeria before the first slave ships sailed from Africa to the New World. Their names and many others in present-day Haiti come from an ancient lore. They recall places, tribes, and old kingdoms from Senegal in northwestern Africa to the heart of the Congo.
[182] They are a bond which holds the people of Haiti to Africa. In the mountains people sometimes say, "Haiti is the child of Dahomey," or "Haiti is the child of Guinée." The gods divide their time between their Haitian and their African children.

776 Yet in some respects the Haitians' concept of their loa is no longer purely
177 African. The African religious patterns have been infiltrated by the lore
172
797

of the Catholic Church and fused with old folk beliefs of Europe. In Dahomey, which was the wellspring for much of Haiti's culture, there was no supreme deity quite like the one introduced to the slaves by the missionaries. There was a pantheon of gods with Mawu and Lisa at the top. They were children of a common parent, Nanambuluku. None of these deities was strictly comparable to our idea of a supreme being. Nanambuluku survives in Haiti as Nanambouclou or Nanambélécou, one of many loa. Among the neighboring Yoruba the high god was Olorun. Like the Dahomean Mawu and Lisa, Olorun was quite remote from the lives of men. The gods who were invoked and placated were the several hundred *orisha* created by Olorun. The nearby Ashanti people had a simpler pantheon, with the sky god Nyame supreme among them. 776 771 777 797

In the present Haitian concept of the supernatural, God is at the very apex of the pantheon, though he is distinctly of another order. His power as the supreme source of all things is fully recognized. A Haitian song, associated with Vodoun ritual but of probable recent origin, goes: 771 776 78

> C'est Bondieu qui voyé moin, quand li vlé moin l'apprend. [Ex. 37] [539]
>
> It is God who sent me, when he wants me he'll take me.

Another song, from the Guinée service, goes:

> Oh, Kita, oh so'ti nan dleau, li tout mouillé!
> Oh, nan point houngan passé Bondieu nan pays-ça! [Ex. 36]
>
> Oh, Kita comes out of the water, he is dripping wet!
> Oh, there is no houngan in this country greater than God!

Although it is recognized, or at least stated, that God is a supreme force, God is not regarded as the entire supernatural force of the world. In many Vodoun services the houngan may invoke, as separate categories of the unseen, the loa, the dead, the *marassas* (twin spirits), and God. Haitians do not have a consistent schematized picture of the supernatural world. God comes first, but (as in West Africa) he is less immediate than the loa. He is identified with destiny; yet within the framework of that destiny man's lot can be bettered or worsened through dealings with the dead, the baka and loup-garou (demons and vampires), and the cult priests.

In many of the folk tales of Haiti, God appears as another character in a cast which may include as protagonists animals, loa, Christian saints, and ordinary men and women. One such tale is about a visit which all the dogs decided to pay to God. They started off through the woods together, but one of them was distracted by the smell of carrion. He left his friends for a brief time, found the carrion, and ate some of it. Then he hurriedly joined his companions again. Together they came to God's house and were admitted to the parlor, where they sat around making polite conver- 776 539 called St. Patrick and sent him down to stop the ceremony. St. Patrick approached the hounfor and sang: 776 534

Factionnaire ouv'é bayè pou' moin passé!

And again Bocor Zandolite came to the gate and sang:

Wa wa ilé londja londja!
Bocor Zandolite wa wa ilé londja londja!

He took St. Patrick by the hands, pirouetted him around, and a loa came into St. Patrick's head, too.

Another week went by, and when St. Patrick didn't return, God sent St. Michael. The same thing happened to St. Michael. God then sent St. Anthony, and later he sent St. Peter. But when St. Peter didn't return, God became very angry indeed. He hadn't slept for weeks. So he decided to go down himself and put an end to the affair. He approached the hounfor singing "Factionnaire ouv'é bayè pou' moin passé!" And Bocor Zandolite replied as he had before. He took God by the hands to greet him. He shook hands downward three times, then he pirouetted God to the right and to the left. God suddenly staggered and reeled from one end of the habitation to the other. The drummers beat a special salute, and the singers sang loudly and clapped their hands, for God had a loa in his head.

This tale appears to relish the superiority of the loa over God. Yet there is no sense of sacrilege. Although the Haitian concept of God is that of a supreme force, and a source of good, the Christian deity also has some of the attributes of paramount gods in certain West African religious systems which make him less remote and even, on occasion, somewhat fallible. He figures in Haitian lore very much like the Ashanti sky god, Nyankonpon, who has dealings with animals and human beings and is sometimes outwitted by them. Although Nyankonpon has the power to dispense favors, justice, and punishment to mortals, he himself lives within, rather than superior to, a well-established physical system. His marvelous deeds are only slightly superior to those of other, lesser gods, or of sorcerers, or of the trickster Anansé. In fact, in one Ashanti tale Nyankonpon finds himself very much in the same situation as God in the Haitian tale, being forced to dance to the music of the trickster's drum. 776 539 171 177

The Christian saints, too, have been incorporated into the Haitian system, and they also have been syncretized with Vodoun elements. They have become identified with various loa according to their most obvious characteristics. St. Patrick, because he is always pictured with snakes, has become one with Damballa and Ayida, who are also symbolized by snakes. Ezilie Fréda, the female loa characterized by purity, has become 776 177

776 177 one with the Holy Virgin. St. Jacques has become one with Ogoun, St. George with Linglessou, St. Anthony and St. Christopher with Legba, guardian of the highway, and St. Nicholas with Marassa Trois. In northern Haiti the word *zange* (from the French, *les anges*—the angels) sometimes is used synonymously with loa or mystère. As for the saints, they are sometimes identified with one loa, sometimes with another.

776 177 178 No one in Haiti knows all the loa. Some of them are so ancient as to be nearly forgotten. Others are spontaneous creations or revelations on the part of a possessed person. Some loa names may be the result of a devotee's seizing upon a word or phrase in a religious song and imparting to it the concept of a loa. Sometimes a word in a phrase of *langage* is taken to be a loa's name, and sometimes agglutinated Creole words become the name of a loa.

776 178 197 [193] The possibility of frequent additions to the list of loa is heightened still further by the general illiteracy of the Haitian people and the lack of a stabilizing influence in the written word. The Creole language has marked regional differences. Furthermore, change of consonants or vowels is a commonplace occurrence, so that a single loa's name may have several forms. One may well wonder whether Aza, Adja, and Akadja were not originally a single individual. Nevertheless, in the Haitian scheme they are now different personalities.

776 171 552 There is one more complicating factor in identifying loa or compiling a comprehensive roster—the use of multiple names. In addition to the names by which they are generally known, many of the deities have a variety of nicknames. Some of these nicknames are in Creole, some appear to be of West African provenience. The deity Agwé, for example, is frequently called Coqui-nan-Mer—Coqui-in-the-Sea. A loa may have four, five, or even more such nicknames. Sometimes short forms are used. Damballa may be called Da, Sobo may be called So, Azaka may be called Za. In addition, some deities have "secret" names, which theoretically are known only to the priesthood and the inner circle of servitors. Multiple naming and the reservation of certain names for special occasions appear to have West African precedents.

In the naming of the loa no neat and methodical system is apparent at any point. The "surname," or what may be in some cases a generic designation, may appear first or last. One may hear Ogoun Chango or Chango Ogoun, Général Brisé or Brisé Général, Congo Savane or Savane [551] Congo. (This is characteristic of everyday speech. A former president of Haiti, Nord Alexis, is often called Alexis Nord.) The "surname" can be a description of "tribal" or "national" affiliation, regional provenience, character and temperament, or an indication of function. Thus we find

The loa, like the rites, vary somewhat according to region and to the
practices of the individual cult priests. New concepts spring up, and they 776
thrive in one locality while remaining unheard of in another. Yet many 184
new concepts travel from hounfor to hounfor. As in the old days in 793
Dahomey, the Vodoun priests sometimes make journeys to visit other cult 794
centers. At one service near Jacmel, on the south coast, I met a houngan 787
from Dondon in the far north and heard him discuss with the local cult chief the appropriate behavior of a loa who had mounted a servitor. The Dondon houngan declared that in the north the loa conducted himself differently. The Jacmel houngan parried with the remark that a loa's behavior is consistent. He said there were only two possibilities concerning the possession as described by the cult chief from Dondon: either the loa had been mistakenly identified, or another deity had attempted to impersonate him. Such exchanges hasten the spread of developing theology from one area to another. They also raise contradictions which remain forever insoluble.

That confusions and contradictions are not merely of Haitian making is 114
made clear by Herskovits' voluminous study of the pantheons of Da- 794
homey.[3] Each of the great cults—the sky cult, the earth cult, and the 177
thunder cult—has its own explanations of the origins and functions of the deities; and even within one cult there are contradicting explanations. The Haitians have taken over, built upon, and diverged from a Dahomean system that contained its own contradictions. In adding to it the system of the Yoruba, with its parallelisms and similarities, they have made the whole picture more complex than ever.

[3] [Herskovits, Dahomey). Cf. p. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]

The importance of water in Vodoun has a fundamentally West African 171
character. Among the Yoruba and the Ashanti and in Dahomey, for 771
example, water rites are a significant aspect of religious ritual. Hersko- 823
vits notes the frequency of religious pilgrimages to streams in West 796
Africa. 778

> In one instance, at Abeokuta, a bedecked procession of worshipers left a shrine atop a high hill, followed a long path to the riverside over two miles away, and returned before the ceremonies could be carried out at the shrine of the god. On one occasion, in Dahomey, the bed of the sacred stream run dry was "filled" from nearby wells so that this water could be ritually redrawn for use in an especially important ceremony. Among the Ashanti, pilgrimages to Lake Bosumtwe and other sacred bodies of water regularly occur. And it is on such occasions that the spirit of the river or lake or sea manifests itself, by "entering the head" of the devotee and causing him to fling himself, possibly possessed, into the water.[8]

So it is also in Haiti, where possession at the river's edge may cause 823
the devotee to leap into the river. At Saut d'Eau, possessed persons 787
plunge into the waterfall without regard for their safety, being in the 778
care of the loa who have mounted them.

Into this water complex the Christian rite of baptism has been easily 177 ●
absorbed, providing merely a new act of veneration for water and its 797
properties. In the Haitian mind baptism is not far removed from the 823
lavé tête ritual, the washing of the head, or the *rafraîchi tête*, the "re- 778
freshing" of the head, both of which are acts in propitiation of the 782
loa.[9] So related is the baptismal concept in the Haitian mind, that the 795
term "baptize" is used to describe the lavé tête; it is said that the loa is 851
being "baptized." So also are drums "baptized," not to menton yams, and
even the *hounfor* itself.

MARRIAGE TO A LOA

Although the term *hounsi* (spirit wife, or wife of the spirit) is applied 588
to a large class of servitors of the Vodoun temple, only a small number [994]
of servitors ever pass through rites which give them a husband-wife or wife-husband relationship with a loa. Reasons for these mystic marriages vary, but usually the rituals take place upon the prescription of a cult priest who interprets the will of the deities concerned. Most of the mystic marriages of which I have heard have taken place in the general area of Port-au-Prince and the Cul-de-Sac Plain. In some other areas of Haiti it appears that no such rites have taken place locally within the memory of the elder inhabitants. One aged man living near Belladère declared: "It [marriage to a loa] is impossible. People serve loa, they do not marry them. A man does not marry his burro. A loa

[8] [Herskovits, The Myth of the Negro Past, p. 233. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. --Analyst]

[9] [It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes toward water rites in certain negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic seizures in familiar form. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. --Analyst]

house, which is on fire. But there is no grief, because Ogoun is the 796
master of fire: 776

Pierre, Pierre Narcisse oh!	Pierre, Pierre Narcisse, oh!	273
Yago moula-é!	*Yago moula-é!*	[539]
Caille Ogoun boulé!	Ogoun's house is burning!	[533]
Guildive Ogoun bel Di!	Ogoun's distillery is beautiful!	
Na consolé! [Ex. 88]	We console ourselves!	

Some of the ritual songs that have persisted through the years have 533
lost their explicit meaning but continue to survive because of beautiful 539
melodies and perhaps the strange images they evoke. Such a song is 776
this one to the loa Atti Daï, from the Dahomey service: [178]

Atti Daï oh!	Atti Daï, oh!
Yo voyé dit moin	They sent to tell me
Min soleil malade! *	The sun was sick!
Quan'm té rivé	When I arrived
Moin joind soleil mouri!	I found the sun had died!
Quan'm té rivé	When I arrived
Moin joind soleil mouri!	I found the sun had died!
C'est regrettant ça	What grief it was
Pou'm enterré soleil! [Ex.89]	For me to bury the sun!

One of the truly lovely songs of the Dahomey rites, both in melody and in lyrics, is the following one to the deity Ézilie. It shows clear [177] evidence of Catholic ritual influence in both its text and its music. Ézilie Fréda, who seems to be speaking most of the lines, is identified with the Virgin Mary, and the tone of this piece casts her more in her Catholic role than her African. The deity is speaking from Yagaza, a place described as being "on the other side of the water." In form the song is atypical in that it has more than one movement and progresses from one idea to another.

Ézilie Nainain oh!
Ézilie Nainain oh!
Ézilie oh, c'est moin Yagaza!

Ézilie n'ap marché n'ap couté n'ap parlé pou' temps y'ap parlé parole moin!
Ézilie n'ap marché n'ap couté pou' temps y'ap parlé parole mwé!
Ézilie Nainain oh!
Ézilie Fréda oh Nainain oh!
Ézilie Fréda oh, c'est moin Yagaza!

Mesdames ah yo chita nan caille là yo vlé djaillé oh tout temps soleil pas lévé!
Mesdames yo passé ya tombé à à génoux y'apé plainnin le sort yo!

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* Some Haitian informants vouched that soleil meant "sun." Others felt that this word in [114]
the song was really [illegible], a diminutive of [illegible], another name for Atti Daï. [115]

with one of his children as he had agreed. That night his oldest child 538
died. The next year to the day, his second child died. And the third 776
year, the third child died. On the fourth anniversary, the man's wife 789
died. On the fifth, he himself died. The djab of Trou Fourban had col- 787
lected his debt. 675

Another great djab lives on the northern mountain called Morne Ronde. A man of Cap Haitien was said to have made a compact with him for wealth. One day there was a great hubbub in front of the man's house. A crowd gathered and stood peering inside his door. What they saw was a rain of money falling down from the rafters. The floor was covered with ten-gourde bills. When the *gendarmerie* came to investigate, they stood at the doorway in awe, watching the money float to the floor. The man finally closed the door. That night he moved away, and no one in Cap Haitien ever saw him again.

The djab are insatiable. For their favors—which range from providing 776
wealth and political position to destroying one's enemies—they always 789
demand more in return than the recipient has counted on. Catholic 675
ritual is called upon in some instances to break the djab's chain of 787 [772]
demands. [788]

Some tales are told in which human beings outwit the djab, par- 776
ticularly the lesser ones; but more often than not, the djab have the last 731
laugh. During the big hurricane which hit Haiti in 1954, a huge landslide occurred near the place called Bayè Roche in the La Selle Mountains. An entire village was wiped out, covered by the falling rocks. Throughout this region the disaster was attributed to the action of a djab reputed to live in one of the nearby caves. Many lost cattle were found wandering near Bayè Roche, and they were believed to be people whom the malevolent djab had transformed into animals.

The height of bravado is to demand to be confronted with a big djab 776
face to face. There is a song which goes: 554
539

Conduit'm allé oh!
Conduit'm allé djab nan Trou Fourban!
Conduit'm allé! [Ex. 91]

Take me, oh!
Take me to the djab in Trou Fourban!
Take me!

There are still other supernatural creatures in Haitian lore who must 775
be guarded against, such as the *djablesse*, the *revenant*, and the *lutin*. The *djablesse* is a female ghost who must live in the woods for a number of years before she can enter heaven, as a punishment for the crime of

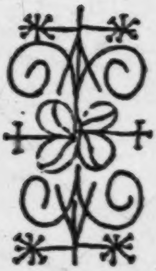
mâché carriage or on papier-mâché horses, make their appearance during 541
Rara as well as on the Day of the Kings (*Les Rois*). 536

Among the traditional paraphernalia carried by Rara groups are 541
cocomacaque sticks, cha-cha rattles, metal rattles called *tchancy*, a set of 575
rattles on a tall thin pole (called *jouçoujou*), candelabra bearing candles 534
or oil lamps (*lampions*), banners and flags, and such miscellaneous musical instruments as the *grage* scraper, bamboo scraping devices, the *basse* finger drum, *assots* (beating boards), and various kinds of secular drums.

The general tone of Rara is nonreligious. The dancing is free from the 541
decorous restraints which characterize most religious ritual, and some [535]
early observers of the festival were shocked by what they saw. Some of them went so far as to attribute Haiti's dense population to the "licentious
activities" and reckless abandon of the spring carnival. The Catholic [795]
Church and some political administrators have sporadically sought to [656]
suppress Rara, along with Vodoun ritual. And even today in Port-au-Prince the foreign visitor often is urged to watch the elite Mardi Gras with its floats and mulatto queens as a substitute.

Although Rara has an over-all tone of secular abandon, it has links 541
with both Catholic and Vodoun ritual. Good Friday is given over in good 177
measure to miming the story of Jesus and Judas. A perambulating band 536
may carry an effigy of Judas hanging from a pole. Another will burn the Judas effigy, or drag it in the dust as the crowd moves along the road. In another group a man playing the part of Judas may crawl on his hands and knees along the trail, while Jesus' avengers pursue him with long, cracking whips.

Tying in with Vodoun ritual, virtually all Rara drums and other 541
paraphernalia are "dedicated" or "rededicated" before Lent in special 776
hounfor services. And on the last day of Rara, usually late in the night, 534
prayers are said, the loa are called upon, and some of the festive par- [778]
aphernalia is thrown into a fire to be consumed.



10. The Arts–
Flour, Wood, and Iron

177 It is the nonmaterial arts and traditions that have thrived best in Haiti
178 through the years of slavery, political unrest, and poverty. Religious con-
53 cepts, music, dancing, folk tales, proverbs, and games are found every-
567 where in profusion. Material arts of the past have fared less well. Today, nothing is left of the old African knowledge of wood carving, metal casting, appliqué work, and weaving. Why such major African arts have died out in Haiti is no mystery. They disappeared simply because there was no place for them under the slave system or in the new Haitian society which followed it.

177 Under the colonial masters, the demands made on the New World
178 African were for coffee, cotton, and indigo. His creative talents were
567 channeled into carpentry, masonry, and the building of facilities for
532 production. There were no traditional artistic outlets or patrons for the wood carver, and no need for the weaver. Nor, during the years of slavery, was there much leisure for the craftsman to do his work even for the fun of it, should he be so inclined; indeed, this approach to wood carving or any other art would have been little understood or appreciated by most West Africans. A man who made an art object purely and simply to express a creative urge rather than to fill an express need would have been regarded as slightly eccentric. The old West African wood carvings with which we are now familiar were made because they were *required* for some purpose. A figure of a deity was needed in a shrine, a carved protective guard was needed for the household, a grave marker or a ceremonial mask was obligatory.

177 In Haiti the needs of those who ruled were different. The slave with
178 knowledge of the forge was not put to work making spears, ceremonial
567 axes, and the like; he was assigned the task of making grillwork for
326 houses, hinges and bolts, iron tires for coach wheels, and metal parts for the sugar mills. The anonymous African ironworker did his job well.

11. Dancing and Dance Drama

177 178 535 The dances of Haiti, like the loa, are almost beyond counting. Like the loa, too, the dances have personalities of their own, sometimes too subtle for the stranger to detect. If there is one valid generalization, it is that the inspiration for the Haitian dance is primarily African. There have been changes in the course of the more than four hundred years since the first Africans came to the New World. Some of the old dances have disappeared altogether; others have developed new characteristics. New dances came into being with European rather than African form. Some of the most traditional dances have become sparse and lean, stripped of the decorative pageantry of earlier days. There are also the French quadrilles and similar square dances which have survived since colonial days in remote parts of the mountains. But it is the quadrille and not the dance of African origin which is atypical in Haiti's folk culture. Dancing is deeply rooted in almost all the important events of Haitian life. It is one of the few arts that have survived from preslavery days.

535 178 175 Early European travelers in Haiti were greatly taken by the dances they found there. Some observers, like Moreau de Saint-Méry, a Frenchman born in Martinique, have left invaluable documentation of the dances of the late eighteenth century. Saint-Méry described many dances that are still known in modern Haiti, such as the Chica, the Calinda, the Vodoun, and the Pétro. From his accounts one may assume that these dances have not changed much to this day.

114 But many of the foreign authors and journalists of early days were astoundingly lacking in understanding and quick to bare their prejudices and to pronounce their moral judgments. Like the explorers of our own time who delight in "returning alive" from some jungle land and in commenting upon all the strange, bizarre, dangerous, and wicked things they think they have seen, the explorer of the Dark Island often described the Haitian as a depraved branch of the human species. One such ob-

114 535 tion helped to perpetuate some prevailing misunderstandings and errors. This distinguished observer wrote:

> The Negroes of the Gold Coast, warlike, bloody, accustomed to human sacrifice, know only dances as ferocious as themselves, while those from the Congo, Senegalese and other African shepherds or agricultural tribes, love dancing as a relaxation, as a source of sensual pleasure. Brought from all parts of Africa to our Colonies . . . , the Negroes brought here and preserved their taste for the dance, a taste so strong that, however tired out from work the Negro may be, he always finds strength to dance and even to travel a long distance to satisfy this desire.
>
> 114 533 535 When the Negroes want to dance, they take two drums, that is, two hollow logs, of unequal length, with one end open, while the other is covered with sheepskin. These drums . . . resound under blows of the wrist and movements of the fingers of a Negro who sits astride of each drum. The larger drum is beaten slowly, the other more rapidly. This monotonous and hollow sound is accompanied by the noise of a certain number of calabashes which have been filled with [534] pebbles . . . Several *banzas,* a sort of large guitar with four strings,[2] join the concert, the tempo of which is regulated by the clapping hands of the Negro women, who form a large circle. They form a sort of chorus, which responds to one or two strident solo voices, which repeat or improvise a song.[3]

535 As for the dance movements themselves, Saint-Méry wrote:

> A male and [a] female dancer, or several dancers divided into equal numbers of each sex, jump into the center of the circle and begin to dance, always two by two. This dance, which varies little, consists of a very simple step in which one foot is put forward after the other, and then drawn back quickly, while striking the toe and the heel on the ground . . . Some turn in place, or around the woman, who turns also and changes places with her partner; that is all which one sees, except for the movement of the arms which the man raises and lowers with the elbows quite close to the body and the hands almost closed. The woman holds two ends of a handkerchief, which she waves . . . One would hardly believe how lively and animated it is, and how much grace it derives from the strictness with which the musical rhythm is followed. The dancers replace one another without respite, and the Negroes are so intoxicated with pleasure that it is necessary to force them to conclude dances of this sort, called *kalendas.*[4]

[114] [171] Saint-Méry then brings forth one of his conclusions, that this dance is obviously the development of a "comparatively uncivilized people," and that it comes from Africa, "where its characteristic features exist everywhere, even among the Hottentots."

114 535 177 [171] Here he missed the point altogether. Although many of the characteristics of this *kalenda* (or Calinda) were African, it had already been intensively hybridized with European dance concepts, such as the pairing off of males and females, who danced as couples. Then, as today, the dances which amazed and shocked the European observer were precisely the ones that had taken over certain European traditions.

[2] [Actually a banjo-like instrument of African provenience. The similarity of the word banza to banjo appears to be more than a coincidence. Cf. p. 352, Category 116.--Analyst]

[3] [Saint-Méry, De la danse, as translated by Lillian Moore in "Moreau de Saint-Méry and 'Danse'" Dance Index, October, 1946, p. 238. Cf. p. 352, Category 116.--Analyst]

[4] Moore, op. cit., p. 238. Cf. p. 352, Category 116.--Analyst]

Saint-Méry also wrote about some of the religious dances, which he identified by name: 171 535

> In Santo Domingo, and especially in the western, French section, there has existed for a long time a kind of dance called the Vaudoux [Vodoun] . . . which is characterized by movements where the upper part of the body, the shoulders and the head seem to move convulsively. This dance is accompanied by the drums, the clapping of hands, and group singing . . .
>
> The Vaudoux is nothing compared to the Don Pedro . . . , another Negro dance, also known in the western part of Santo Domingo since 1768. Don Pedro was the name of a Negro of the Petit-Goave section, of Spanish origin, who by his daring character and certain superstitious practices, had acquired among the Negroes enough influence to be denounced by the government as the instigator of some alarming plots. The dance which bears his name consists, like the Vaudoux, in the shaking of the shoulders and the head, but this shaking is extremely violent, and to increase it still further the Negroes drink, while dancing, brandy in which they have mixed finely ground gunpowder . . .[a] They dance with the most horrible contortions, until finally they fall into a sort of epilepsy . . .[*]

Making allowances for Saint-Méry's imaginative interpretation of many 177
of the things he saw, the Haitian dance of today is not far different 178
from that of the eighteenth century. It is cast in the West African 533
mold, with Dahomean and Yoruban motifs predominating over European 535
and other Western infiltrations. As in Saint-Méry's day, the drummers (114)
sit at the edge of the dance court, a leader wielding a gourd rattle leads the singing, and the dancers and spectators constitute the chorus. The dancers usually move around the center of the court in a counterclockwise direction. Their steps and postures vary according to the type of dance being performed. The Jenvalo, for example, is danced with a bent back, hands touching the knees. In the Zépaule dance the dancers are erect, and most of the movements are made with the shoulders. In the Pétro (the Don Pedro described by Saint-Méry) there is a constant, almost agitated movement of the feet. The songs accompanying these cult dances, while presented in African style, may have hybrid or even French melodies, though in the main they are more African than European. The over-all context of the cult dances, as well as most of the secular ones, is West African, with constant interplay between the singers, dancers, and drummers. Sometime the dancers "drive" the drummers, sometimes the drummers "drive" the dancers. Certain beats of the drum are signals for special movements and postures. On hearing special beats or rolls, the dancers may leap vertically into the air, or perform a *taillé* (a swirling motion that causes the skirts to flare out), or a *djaillé* (excitement motions). Increased tension among the dancers may cause the drummers to shift the beat, or to increase

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[a] [Brandy or rum with gunpowder is sometimes drunk by persons possessed by the loa Ogoun, deity of war. Cf. p. 352, Cat. 116.--Analyst]

[*] Moore, op. cit., p. 238. [Cf. p. 352, Cat. 116.--Analyst]

177 178 tempo. The chorus and leader sing responsively, their parts overlapping
533 in traditional African style. The shoulder movements, foot movements,
535 the way the arms are carried, and the typical posture of feet flat on
the ground, bent knees, and swayed back—all are of African derivation.

535 These postures and movements are broad and direct. There are few of the decorative and "fine" movements that one sees in the dances of Indonesia, Cambodia, and India. Where the Javanese lays stress on the pose of the hands and the delicate movements of the fingers, the Haitian dancer is concerned with the position of the arms and the motions of the shoulders. The Indonesian sense of poised balance or suspended movement is absent. In its place there is an attitude of strong frontal assault against natural forces such as gravity, or direct submission to those forces. There is almost always a feeling of solidity and stability in Haitian posture, and of a proximity between the body and the earth, but the total effect is dynamic. Indonesian dancing seems to express a comprehension of the unseen and the supernatural; Haitian dancing seems to express an intimate understanding of nature.

535 Dancing touches on virtually every aspect of life in Haiti. It plays a
778 part in the supplication of loa, the placation of the dead, and the making
796 of magic; in the consecration of a hounfor, the installation of a houngan,
527 and the initiation of cult members; in planting, harvesting, and house-
574 building. Catholic Church holidays, Nine Nights, baptisms, the election
182 of a new president, and ordinary social gatherings—all are celebrated, in
part, at least, by dancing.

535 Haitian dancing is participative rather than exhibitionistic. It is to join rather than to watch. There are some dances, however, which require special skills, and a few which are highly individualistic. Several types of dances are described elsewhere in this book. Verbal description cannot do justice to an art such as dancing, of course; but some brief sketches may help to suggest the differences between one Haitian dance and another.

In the Congo Mazonne, for example, men and women pair off and dance face to face, making contact occasionally but only briefly. The arms are stretched forward as though to embrace the partner around the waist, but the actual embrace never materializes. The partners dance sometimes as though they are unaware of each other and are simply part of a larger group; then they approach, move as mirrored reproduc-
[831] tions, and separate. Loin movement is free, and there is a restrained
sexual intensity, though direct sexual implications are not necessarily
present. Sometimes the woman holds the hem of her skirt in her hands, while the man holds his jacket open toward his partner.

The last

535 form,² is heard most often during carnival days. In all variations of the Meringue, the dance is performed by couples in ballroom style. Among [831] the elite, it is restrained. Elsewhere it is much more animated, with free and uninhibited pelvic motions similar to those seen at the Saturday 171 night *bamboche*. Although the Haitian regards his Meringue as a national 177 popular dance, Spanish-type music has infiltrated heavily from the Dominican Republic, Cuba, and other islands of the West Indies. Thousands 53 of Haitians returning from contract labor in Cuba have brought with them not only Cuban songs and rhythms but Cuban instruments as well. It has not been a one-way affair, however, for the Arada cults of eastern Cuba have been built substantially around immigrants from Haiti, and in the Cuban mountains you may hear music and see dances of Afro-Haitian origin.

Still other kinds of dances are to be found in remote villages of Haiti—the old folk dances of Europe. The villagers still know and perform the waltz, the polka, the mazurka and the quadrille, usually to the accompaniment of violins or guitars, or possibly an accordion.

But the influences are not all ancient ones. Jazz has infiltrated the Meringue. And some years ago a small boy asked me with some concern whether I had taken proper account of a very important dance called *le black bottom.*

535 [178] Following is a list of dances known to Haitians today. Some of them are found throughout Haiti, some are known only regionally, and a few are on the verge of extinction.

DANCES CONNECTED WITH VODOUN RITUAL

Arada, or Rada: One of the main dances of the Vodoun service, named after the Dahomean city and cult center, Allada.

Anago, or Nago: Named after the Nagos, a branch of the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria. For deities of Nago origin.

Mahi: Named after the Mahi people of Dahomey.

Dérial: A Mahi dance of northern Haiti.

Parigale: Another Mahi type of dance. Possibly from *pas régal* (royal step).

Jenvalo, or Yenvalo: A supplication dance, variously called Jenvalo Doba (*dos bas,* low back), Jenvalo Jénon (*genoux,* knees), and Dobado.

Zépaule: A supplication dance in which the movements are made primarily by the shoulders (*les épaules*). It is sometimes called Jenvalo Zépaule or Jenvalo Débout (standing Jenvalo).

Flavorodoun: Another type of shoulder dance known in the north.

Banda, or Chica: A gay and sometimes ribald dance, said to be much favored by the loa Cousin Zaka and the loa Gèdé.

Maçonne Rada: The "Masonic" Rada dance; often danced for the loa Gèdé.

Carabienne or Crabienne: A rest dance, interspersed into long-drawn-out Arada

²[i.e., the "Meringue Coundjaille" in which the rhythm is very fast.--Analyst]

535 ***Baboule*, or *Bamboula*:** Danced on the occasion of building a new house.

535 ***Mascort*:** Danced by a *société* after communal work on the land of one of its members.

476 ***Ti Coumbe*:** Another *société* work dance, sometimes closely related to Vodoun ritual. Known in Brazil as Macumba.

***Koune*, or *Coundjaille*:** A dance connected with communal work celebrations.[8]

RARA AND CARNIVAL DANCES

535 541 ***Rara*, also called *Chariopié*, *Lavalwadi*, and *Vaccine*:** The perambulating dances of the Rara festival.

***Mascaron*, or *Cocoyé*:** Danced for the Mardi Gras.

***Paillette*:** Any carnival dance in costume.

***Batonnie*:** A carnival stick dance with West African precedents.

***Trèsé Riban*:** The carnival Maypole dance.

***Congo Paillette*:** The "Straw Congo," or "Costume Congo," the carnival dance of the *société* Congo. It is also known as Ciyé and Congo Mardi Gras.

***Rabordage*:** A Mardi Gras perambulating dance.

***Chaluska*:** A Mardi Gras dance in which the participants are dressed as nineteenth-century generals. Comic mimicry. Also referred to as Charles Oscar.

Zizipan

Roboto

Mayousse

535 OTHER SECULAR AND MISCELLANEOUS DANCES

***Zesse*:** A *gage* dance of northern Haiti.

***Calinda*:** A mock battle dance. Also a dance of the Calinda "secret society."

***Ka*:** A dance which takes its name from the *ka*, a secular drum.

Bèlè*, or *Belair

Mangouline

***Ti Crip*:** This is regarded by some informants as one of the Pétro dances.

***Malfini*:** "The Hawk," a dance of northern Haiti.

***Pinyique*:** A simple "good time" dance.

***Bambilé*:** A simple "good time" dance.

***Bamboche*:** A "good time" dance. The term is often used to designate any social dance. As a verb, *bamboché* means "to dance" or "to have a good time."

535 SECULAR DANCES OF EUROPEAN TYPE

● 177 ***Meringue*:** There are three main types of Meringue—the drawing-room Meringue, the ordinary "ballroom" Meringue, and the Meringue Coundjaille (which is fast and agitated). A development of the last decade or so is the jazz Meringue.

***Ti Bobine*:** This is a sort of square dance, though it is sometimes danced in Meringue style.

***Ménwèt*, or *Ménuet*:** The minuet.

Polka

Waltz

Quadrille

Mazurka

Contredanse

[8] [Footnote appears on p. 352, Category 116.--Analyst]

[P. 170]

16. Folk Tales: Bouki, Malice, and Jean Saute

538 In the folk tales and legends of Haiti there has been a powerful assimila-
● 177 tion from many cultures. There are stories of European and African deri-
171 vation, and countless others that are to be found in one form or another
in the Middle East, Asia, and throughout the Americas. The precise
origins of many of these stories probably will never be known. Some of
them are as ancient as the Panchatantra and have variants in India, In-
donesia, Korea, Egypt, West Africa, and northern Europe. It is likely that
many tales with this broad distribution came into Haiti by way of Europe,
along with the French, Spanish, and English settlers. But numerous stories
told in Europe are well known in West and Central Africa too. The folk
tales of the world have an astonishing universality. The adventures of the
West African hare and spider are closely paralleled in the tales of the
American Negro Br'er Rabbit, the hare of Thailand, and the mouse deer
of Indonesia.

538 In Haiti today, as in other islands of the West Indies, there is an endless
repertoire of folk stories of many kinds—animal tales; trickster tales;
stories about magicians, kings, and princesses; *contes* fables; and stories
that account for the beginnings of things, the behavior of certain animals,
[177] and their physical appearance. There are European dragons and devils,
and beasts of the African forests. Some of the stories are long and episodic,
some are so brief—even curt—that they have lost their original core. They
may point out moral or ethical values or, more commonly, strike com-
pletely amoral levels in which the humor depends upon acts that in real
life would be regarded as cruel. Like the folk songs, the tales are often used
to express the democratic equality of the small person with the great. In
many instances it is the small man who triumphs over the powerful and
rich. In the Bouki-Malice cycle it is usually the little wily trickster who
wins over the larger and physically stronger opponents.

None of the Haitian tales are meant to be read, for storytelling is a

171 538 and Br'er Fox are the protagonists. Many of these tales, like the characters themselves, have West African prototypes, though others seem to have been created out of the workaday substance of Haitian life. They are not, however, essentially children's tales. Some of them involve risqué or ribald escapades.

Among the Haitian tales are numerous themes which stem directly from African lore, such as the hoe that worked by itself in the fields; the single grain of seed corn which, when drawn across the ground, grew an entire field of maize; and the pot that boiled without fire. There are many remnants also of the African tale in which a "tail feather" of an elephant is required for some magic purpose. There is a pursuit which follows the acquisition of the elephant hairs, and the pursued person saves himself with three magical eggs. When he throws one on the ground, a huge river springs up behind him. When he throws down another, a forest appears behind him, and so on.[1] The elephant's tail feather is regarded as a very powerful protective charm in many regions of West Africa. That the memory of it should continue in Haiti so precisely, although there are no elephants, is striking.

177 538 Although Haitian folk tales are abundant and are well loved, over the years they have tended to become more and more simple. The episodic European tales of kings and princesses and monsters that have been taken over are, generally, of a naïve kind without moral or intellectual significance. They are interesting for the twists and turns of fate and for momentary laughs.

The tale of Grandmother's Bath is a case in point. In this story, Jean Saute (Stupid John) is left at home to care for Grandmother while Jean L'Esprit (Smart John) goes to market. Jean Saute puts Grandmother in a tub and pours boiling water over her, killing her instantly. He looks at the grimace on her face and concludes that she is enjoying it immensely; so he sticks her pipe in her mouth and pours more water over her. When Jean L'Esprit returns, Jean Saute is very proud of himself. But Jean L'Esprit discovers that Grandmother is dead. The brothers then pack their belongings to go to the city. There follows a series of strange and bizarre adventures. Jean L'Esprit sends his dull-witted brother back for something he has forgotten; Jean Saute misunderstands and brings the door off the house. Throughout their adventures Jean Saute carries the door with him. When they get to the forest they climb into a tree to sleep for the night, Jean Saute carrying his door along. While they are there, a convocation of devils (*djab*) takes place under the tree. Jean Saute has to urinate, and he does so into the middle of the convocation. The devils shout gleefully that it is wine from heaven and try to catch the water. Eventually the door

[1] [Footnote appear on p. 353, Category 116. --Analyst]

172 538 falls from the tree and frightens them away. The two brothers continue on their way and come to a country where it is always night—a great dragon with seven heads has swallowed the sun.[5] The two brothers kill the dragon, with the help of Jean Saute's stupidity. They cut into the monster and find a silver box, which they open, releasing the sun from captivity. The news goes on ahead. When they arrive at the city, the king, in appreciation, offers them the choice of his daughters. Jean L'Esprit, as might be expected, chooses the youngest and most beautiful. Jean Saute turns them all down and asks to marry the king's cook.

This story seems to be one of the most extended tales in Haitian lore, unless one groups all the Bouki-Malice stories together in a single cycle. However, most European-style tales (Beauty and the Beast and Jack and the Beanstalk, for instance) have suffered considerable deterioration. In the process of adaptation, such tales lost much of the original detail and decorative motif that made them interesting to the European. They became stark and brief, fragmentary anecdotes about kings, devils, and snakes.

171 538 With some few exceptions, the African stories have undergone less change: the Singing Tortoise (found later in this chapter) and Anansi's Tug of War, for example. But even in the tales of African origin there has been simplification to the extent that many of them are mere fragments; in some even the central point itself has been lost. The Bouki-Malice tales, counterparts of the Anansi stories of West Africa, have lost the contemplative tone found in the African originals. Moral points of the kind commonly made in African tales have almost entirely disappeared and are to be found only in proverbs. If the good wins over the bad, that is simply an accident of fate; for the bad wins over the good just as frequently. Death and sadism are constant themes. But the prime conflict remains the smart against the stupid, and the small and weak against the large and powerful.

538 Like kindred tales elsewhere in the West Indies and in the United States, many of the stories have standard beginnings and endings. The storyteller begins by saying "Cric," and his audience replies, "Crac." When he comes to the end he usually uses a variant of:

"I was there and saw it. And Malice gave me a kick and sent me all the way here to tell you about it." Or: "So I have run all the way here to tell it to you." Or: "That's the story, and if you don't believe me, tafia will never kill you." Or: "They gave me a blow, and I have just come to my senses." Or again: "So he kicked me over the house and here I am." These formula endings often provide a dramatic punch for the children who are listening.

[5] [Footnote appears on p. 353, Category IL-Analysis]

[P. 189]

18. Musical Instruments

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The Haitian people have drawn heavily on both Europe and Africa for 177
their musical inspiration. In music, as in other traditions, the country is 533
bicultural. There is, on the one hand, the music of the so-called *élite*—the 534
literate and educated class which is concentrated in the cities—and on [illegible]
the other hand, the music of the peasants, the plantation laborers, and 591
the lower economic groups of the town. The *élite* music is in the European
or Western tradition, while the true folk music of Haiti follows, in the
main, in the wake of West African musical culture. The instruments of
élite music are primarily those of Western Europe. The instruments of 177
the folk music of the country are those which can best interpret the main- 533
stream currents of the West African heritage—instruments of African 534
design and function. European-style instruments have infiltrated into the
folk music too, but the over-all picture is that of a survival of African
musical devices to interpret music cast in an African mold. It is the folk-
music instruments which call for examination—the instruments that are
made in the villages and tiny huts in the mountains, the instruments
on which the significant music of Haiti depends.

The materials from which these instruments are made are usually 534 those found upon the land. If a man wishes to make a drum, he cuts down a tree for the purpose. For material for a bamboo trumpet he goes to the bamboo grove. For a flute, he cuts a reed. Metal is used for making African-style bells, rattles, singing horns, and substitutes for bamboo trumpets.

The drum in its many forms is the most common instrument of all. It is used for dances of all kinds, for cult rites, for work music on the road and in the field, and for assembly calls and signals. Not very many years ago the older people in the south of Haiti still spoke of the "talking drums" they had seen as children.

The craft of drum making is a very skilled one, but the tools are

534 [177] the Haitian word for "twins." They are used primarily for secular music of the Cuban type, and may in fact be an importation from Cuba. The marassa is one of the few drums on which a finger technique is used; that is, striking with individual fingers rather than with grouped fingers. Marassas are often played in concert with guitars and marimbas.

The *basse* is the shallow finger drum resembling what in the United States is called the tambourine. Constructed in the pattern of an African prototype, its head is usually fifteen or eighteen inches in diameter and made of goatskin. Small metal disks sometimes are inserted in the frame [534] [239] to act as rattles. The head is kept well coated with resin or beeswax and is tapped and rubbed with the fingers. The *basse* is used only for secular music, except in the rare instances when it is used in Congo services. Some Haitians believe that the name of the instrument comes from the word *Basque*.

534 202 It is reported that signal drums were still in use a decade ago in remote sections of the southwestern peninsula. One of these instruments, according to description, is distinguished mainly by its large belly and small mouth; like the Juba drum, it is played on its side. Another style of signal drum has a slit in the side and is played erect, much like an African slit-log drum standing on end.

534 [171] Another percussion instrument is the bamboo stamping tube, called the *ganbo* or *ti kanmbo*. It is African in origin and probably takes its name from the Loango term for the same device, *dikanmbo*.[2] The stamping tube is simply a length of bamboo, open at one end and closed at the other by a natural joint membrane. The closed end is struck sharply upon the ground, and the tone comes from the open top. The device works like an inverted drum, the closed end functioning like a drumhead. A battery of four or five ganbos may provide the percussion music otherwise played by drums. The musician corresponding to the *boulatier* of the drum orchestra plays two small stamping tubes, one in each hand. The other musicians have one each, thicker and longer than the boulatier's and producing deeper tones. Cupped hands are manipulated over the open ends for varying the sounds. This instrument [171] has survived in various parts of the New World where Africans were settled, particularly other West Indian islands, Brazil, and Venezuela. In Venezuela the stamping tubes are called *quitiplas*.[3] They have recently been reported from various areas of West Africa, including French Equatorial Africa.[4]

534 248 778 The ganbos had a singular burst of popularity in Haiti during the United States military occupation of the country after the first World War, when drums were often seized and destroyed. Drums could not

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[115] [2] [Informant: Joseph Lengo, Brazzaville. Cf. P. 354, Category 116. --Analyst]

[3] [Library of Congress album, Folk Music of Venezuela. Cf P. 354 Category 116. --Analyst]

[4] [Pamphlet accompanying recording Music of Equatorial Africa (New York: Ethnic Folkways Library, 1950). Cf P. 354, Cat. 116. --Analyst]

easily be hidden, but the ganbos were simply slipped into the straw 534
roofs and thus put out of sight. Moreover, by some strange process of 648
reasoning, military authorities regarded the bamboos as "harmless," 798
though they were used for the same purposes as the contraband drums.

There are numerous other kinds of simple percussion devices. One 534
such instrument, now less commonly seen than previously, is a length
of open bamboo laid in the crotches of two Y-shaped sticks set in the
ground. Like other *catas,* the bamboo is beaten with two sticks. Some
Haitians believe that in former days such bamboos were played in batteries
like a xylophone.

Sometimes a light-weight wooden cylinder, or perhaps a drum denuded [461]
of its playing head, is carried by the timekeeper of a coumbite. [476]
It, also, is played on the side with sticks.

Wooden mortars for pulverizing grain take on the character of musical 534
instruments when used in combination with voices. When two or more 533
mortars are used, with two men or women wielding the long polelike 412
pestles in each mortar, the rhythmic effects can become fairly complicated.

The *claves* or *palos* (small hardwood sticks) are used primarily in 534
connection with secular dances of a Cuban type, or to accompany such 535
instruments as the guitar and the marimba. One stick is held loosely in [177]
the natural fold of the hand, so that it is free to vibrate, and is struck
sharply with the second stick. The tone is almost metallic because of [824]
the hardness of the wood, usually lignum vitae. The name of the instrument
is recognizable as a form of *clavar,* or *clavo,* Spanish for "peg"
or "nail." It is thought that wooden shipbuilding pegs provided the [171]
name for this device, which has equivalents in West Africa.

Among the folk instruments there are various kinds of horns and 534
trumpets. Cows' horns are played musically in some parts of the southern 184
peninsula, though usually they are used as ritual instruments and signaling
devices. Wooden trumpets called *pistons* are carved from the stems [824]
of the papaya tree. Conch-shell trumpets, known as *lambis,* are commonly [202]
used as signaling devices by fishermen. They are also to be
found among the coumbites, in Rara festivities, and occasionally in
rituals, where they are usually identified with sea deities. In carnival [541]
times the old fashioned phonograph horn makes its appearance as a combined [216]
trumpet and voice amplifier.

Probably the most important of the trumpets is the one made of 534
bamboo. It is called a *vaccine* x or *bois bourrique.* Both names have interesting 755
origins. The cow's horn was at one time used for magico- [237]
medical purposes. The leaf doctor used it as an "applicator" of powders
and potions. A small opening was made in the point of the horn, and

x [See plate 8, p. 112-F. --Analyst]

534 155 the horn itself was filled with the magico-medical preparation, which was called *vaccine*. The point of the horn was applied to parts of the body which needed treatment, and the powers of the potion were thus transmitted to the affected areas. In time, the cow's horn itself came to be known as a *vaccine*. Eventually the horn used for musical purposes took over the name, which was then transferred to the bamboo trumpet. The other name by which the bamboo trumpet is known, *bois bourrique*, means burro wood. But it probably is a corruption of *voix bourrique*, meaning "donkey's voice," an accurate description of the sound it makes.

534 535 The vaccine consists of a length of bamboo, with a joint membrane at one end cut into a mouthpiece. Trumpets of different sizes give different tones, and three to five of them together constitute a vaccine orchestra. Vaccines are employed by the coumbites in the fields, and they are heard in the towns and cities primarily during the pre-Easter festivities. In the Rara festivals the vaccine players march together, blowing and tapping their trumpets with sticks, followed by a crowd of dancers. Traditionally, the bamboo trumpet is not employed in religious music, although in recent years it has made its appearance occasionally in Congo-Guinée rites.

534 There are two kinds of musical scrapers. The one more often seen is the *graje*, a piece of sheet metal perforated in the fashion of our common kitchen grater. It is "played" by scraping a piece of wire or a nail across its rough surface. Found in secular rather than religious settings, the graje is likely to be used in combination with such instruments as the *tambourine*, marimba, claves, and bass. The second form of scraper is the *dentlé*, or *dentli*, a notched stick played with a bamboo scraping blade. The free end of the stick is sometimes braced against a bench or a plank, which acts as a sounding board. Some Haitians reported that in the old days gourds were used as sounding chambers.
534 171 The scraper in one form or another appears to have both Indian and West African precedents. Its relationship to the washboard as used in Negro folk music in the United States is obvious. The notched gourd
● [172] called the *guiro*, found in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and other West Indian islands, appears to be present in Haiti only as an imported instrument.

534 535 Rattles of various types are used in religious and secular dances, in the invocation of deities, and as accompaniment for solo singing. The most common of the rattles is the simple cha-cha, or *kwa-kwa*. It is a small gourd with a wooden handle, with seeds inside. It is usually played by the singing leader as a device to keep time. Sometimes the long dry seed pods of the cha-cha tree are used as a substitute.

[illegible] In the Rara season two special rattles are used. One of them is made

534 [541] Among the noisemakers heard mostly at the time of the Rara festival (usually on Good Friday) are the *von-von*, or bull-roarer—a thin flat piece of wood whirled on the end of a cord—and the *rara*, the common wooden ratchet. Various types of wooden flutes, usually of bamboo, are also used.

[184] In the remoter parts of the mountains you may now and then hear of an instrument known as the *banza*. A century ago, it would appear, the *banza* was a stringed instrument resembling a banjo. The similarity of names is striking, in view of the instrument's early form. Today,
● [177] however, the word *banza* is applied to the homemade fiddle which is used to accompany the minuet and other old dances of European origin.

534 524 178 A children's instrument seen sometimes in the mountains is constructed of half of a calabash shell, across the opening of which have been stretched a number of cords. This plucked device appears to be a decadent form of the African trough zither.

[pp 203-313 not processed]

776 184 794 a "nation" in the Dahomé rites; and the Ibo group, though still distinct, is frequently allied with the Dahomé rites or the Guinée rites.

The following list does not pretend to include all the loa known in Haiti. It is doubtful that a complete list could ever be compiled, in view of the continual generation of new deities and the constant cross-fertilization between "nations." [128] The loa are grouped here according to most widespread usage. There are contradictions from which there is no possible escape, and these general groupings will not necessarily correspond to the concepts and practices of any specific locality. It is intended here to give a broad and generalized view.

128 776 794 Under "The Vodoun Pantheon" I have placed constellations of deities of Dahomean and Yoruban origin, along with others that are clearly identified with Vodoun rites. Under "The Congo and Pétro Pantheons" I have listed the Congo-Guinée loa—consisting mainly of deities associated with Central Africa and deities affiliated with the Pétro rites. Ibo and Kanga loa are grouped together, because in many regions of Haiti the two pantheons appear to be interlocked. A separate listing is given for the Simbi family of water deities in view of their ambivalence; they are sometimes found in the Pétro group and sometimes in the Dahomé, according to local practice.

THE VODOUN PANTHEON

776 171 **Damballa Wédo**, or **Dan Wédo**. One of the most venerable of Haitian loa. He is generally recognized as the husband of Ayida Wédo, though occasionally the two deities are merged in a personality called Damballa-Ayida. The concept of a single identity for Damballa and Ayida conforms to Dahomean belief. In both Haiti and West Africa, Damballa is identified with the rainbow and is symbolized as a snake.[a] In Haiti he is associated also with rainfall, springs, and fertility. [782] He is sometimes described as "white," and the proper food offering to him is a white chicken. [784] Persons possessed by Damballa usually take on stylized characteristics of snakes. [777] Along with many other important loa, he has become identified with characters in Christian religious belief. There are, in fact, "two" Damballa Wédos. One, identified with Moses, comes in talking; the other, identified with St. Patrick, never talks. [782] Food offerings for the St. Patrick version of Damballa consist of eggs, flour, sugar, and almond syrup. Damballa remains one of the chief gods of the Dahomey cult in Cuba, and he survived into the last century in New Orleans under the name Danny.

[822] **Ayida Wédo**. Generally regarded in Haiti as the wife of Damballa, Ayida is also symbolized by snake and rainbow, and her color, like Damballa's, is "white." In Dahomey and Nigeria, Ayida is known as a male rather than a female spirit and is regarded there as the same divinity as Damballa, or Dã. In Dahomey, Ayida Wédo was the great serpent who held up the world. According to one myth, the Creator of the World assigned to Ayida the task of holding up the earth to keep it from falling into the sea. The great serpent coiled himself, tail in mouth, and lay below

[a] [Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 245 ff. Cf. p. 354, Category 46.--Analyst]

[The Vodoun Pantheon]

the earth like the carrying pad that women wear to support bundles on their heads. 776
Whenever Ayida Wèdo shifted his position there were earthquakes.[1] When the rain- [171]
bow appeared after a rain it was said that Ayida had come out from under the [821]
earth to drink of the fresh water.

Damballa Grand Chemin (Damballa of the Highway). Another manifestation [484]
of Damballa as a protector of those on long journeys.

Damballa Verre. Another manifestation of Damballa.

Dossi Wèdo. Considered to be the daughter of Damballa. The ending of her name (-si) suggests that at one time she may have been considered a wife rather than a daughter.

Dosu Wèdo. A member of Damballa's family.

Aïdo Wèdo. A member of Damballa's family. Said to be a "work loa" who aids [241]
men with their gardens, especially in time of illness.

Ezilie Doba, or Dobas, sometimes spelled Erzulie. One of the "big" loa of the [177] ●
Dahomé pantheon, a symbol of purity, and sometimes identified with the Virgin [822]
Mary. Her color is white, and services to her include a ritual sweeping and sprin- [782]
kling of the earth and a perfuming of the air. Food offerings to her include corn [787]
meal and eggs. Male "horses" of Ezilie are sometimes bound to her by mystic [834]
marriages, and they are obligated to refrain from sexual intercourse on certain [588]
days which belong to her. There are a number of Ezilies, regarded as members of the same family or, in some cult centers, as different manifestations of the same deity. Some Haitians regard Ezilie Doba as the ancestor of the Ezilie family and refer to her as Grand Ezilie. Note that there is a Dahomean town named Dogba at approximately 0° 6' E., 6° 45' N.

Ezilie Freda, or Ezilie Dahomey (Dahomé), or Ezilie Freda Dahomey. Like [177]
Ezilie Doba, she is a symbol of purity and is identified with the Virgin Mary. [588]
Mystic marriages are performed with her, and her "horses" are obligated to re- [787]
frain from sexual intercourse on certain days. She is also a giver of wealth. [834]

Ezilie Wèdo. A sister or daughter of Ezilie Doba and also related to Damballa.

Ezilie Marin. A sister of Ezilie Freda.

Ezilie Banda. A manifestation of Ezilie who is especially fond of the Banda dance.

Ezilie Jé Rouge (Red Eyes). A stern and hard Ezilie who is often identified with Pétro rather than Dahomé rites.

Aizan Freda. A member of the Ezilie coterie, regarded as a market-place protector. [443]
In Dahomey, Aizan was a protector of all public gathering places.[2] [171]

Aizan Baladré

Aizan Dahou Boso Bosu

Maîtresse Mambo. A special form of Ezilie as priestess.

Maîtresse Espagnole, or [illegible]. A person mounted by this Ezilie talks only [787]
Spanish. [191]

Sobo, or Sogbo. A thunder deity who hurls stones to the earth when angered. 776
Some of the stones thrown by Sobo are regarded as the sacred residence of various 171
loa. Sobo (or Sogbo) is a member of the original Thunder pantheon of Dahomey.

Sobo Badé, or Sobo Badè, or simply Badé. A close relative of Sobo, regarded as the protector of the thunder (*badè*). In Dahomey, Badé is sometimes referred to as the son of the deity Sobo.[3]

[1] [See Ellis, The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, pp 47-49; and Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 245ff. Cf p 354 Category 116. --Analyst]

[2] [Ellis, op. cit., p. 52. Cf. p 354, Category 116. --Analyst]

[3] [Herskovits, op. cit., pp. 152ff. Cf. p 354, Cat. 116. --Analyst]

Maît' Grand Chemin (Master of the Highway). Probably Legba. 776

Makandal. Believed to be the spirit of the famous houngan Makandal, who lived during the revolutionary period. He is symbolized as a snake which lives in the ground. Some informants think he is a Pétro rather than a Dahomé loa. [775]

Mambo Çaça

Tijean Dantor (Ancient Tijean)

Whydah Wèdo. Whydah is the name of a seacoast town in Dahomey.

Zo. A fire deity of clear Dahomean origin.[82]

Olicha

Osha, or Osange. Known also among the Lucumí cults of Cuba. May be any one of the Osanges mentioned by Herskovits. [171]

Osange Lêlê

Ossanyaké

Papa Dambalé

Pierre Badagri. This loa is sometimes identified with St. Peter. [177]

Pierre Damballa, Dambadda, or Dambada. Sometimes identified with St. Peter.

Pierre Wèdo. Related to Whydah Wèdo.

Poula, or Foula. This name is probably a tribal designation.

Sabata. Described as a loa of ancient times. Sabata or Sagbata is the so-called smallpox group of deities of Dahomey.

Sèla. A female deity, thought by some to belong to the Ezilie Fréda family.

Silibo Gweto. In Dahomey, according to Herskovits, Silibo is an ancient sib-founder. [171]

Sobaya

Tavenao

Ti Coca. This is a "false name"; this loa keeps his real name a secret.

THE AMBIVALENT SIMBI FAMILY

This group of loa in certain regions has attached itself to the Vodoun pantheon, elsewhere to the Congo-Guinée pantheon; but it has not maintained any kind of independent or semi-independent status. The deity Simbi and his family are of Congo origin. [171]

Simba. A male deity, patron of rain and drinking water. Said to be the father of the Simbi brothers.

Simbi Dleau. The best known of the Simbi family. Like his father, he is the patron of fresh water, is associated with the spring, and usually is symbolized as a snake. The color sacred to him is white. Altars to Simbi Dleau usually are found at the spring or the well. Sometimes pools are constructed for him within the hounfor. [823] [822] [778]

Simbi Kita

Simbi Yandèzo, or Simbi Nan Dé Zaux (Simbi in Two Waters). Symbolized as a water snake who lives in the "upper" waters and the "lower" waters.

Grand Simba. The parent of Simbis, and ancestor of the entire family of water loa.

Simbi Twa Zilé (Simbi of Three Islands)

Simbi Makaya

Simbi Gran Bois (Simbi of the Forest)

[82] [Ellis, The Ewe-Speaking Peoples, pp. 91-94. Cf. p. 354, category 116.--Analyst]

CHAPTER 12: *Songs of Complaint, Recrimination, and Gossip* (*pp. 137–147*)

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[1] See Herskovits and Herskovits, *Suriname Folk-Lore*, pp. 23–32.

CHAPTER 13: *Comments on the Mighty: Political Songs* (*pp. 148–162*)

[1] Léger, *Haiti, Her History and Her Detractors.*

CHAPTER 15: *Secret-Society Songs* (*pp. 166–169*)

[1] Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, p. 296.

[2] See Courlander, "Abakwa Meeting in Guanabacoa," *Journal of Negro History*, XXIX (1944), 461 ff.

CHAPTER 16: *Folk Tales: Bouki, Malice, and Jean Sotte* (*pp. 170–184*)

[1] The theme of throwing magic objects upon the ground to ward off a pursuer is widely known, but the story as told in Africa has special characteristics of its own, such as the elephant hair. In Ashanti tales, the prize is the tail of the queen elephant, which is needed to serve as a suman. 171 538 [029]

[2] This part of the tale, at least, dealing with the dragon that swallowed the sun, seems to be known in western Europe. Some aspects of the tale of Grandmother's Bath have come from France. [177]

[3] Variants of "The President Wants No More of Anansi" are widely known around the world. The story is told among the Somali of East Africa, with the legendary character Abunuwas, a Persian trickster hero, playing the title role. Anansi plays the same part in West Africa, and other trickster heroes are identified with the same adventure in India and Southeast Asia. The tale has been reported also from the West Indian island of St. Martin ("He Meets the King's Conditions," in Parsons, *Folk-Lore of the Antilles, French and English*, Part II). 539 171

[4] The fishing story narrated here, except for the chase, is found in many versions in West Africa. The second part of the tale, the pursuit, has a special Haitian flavor. Bouki chasing Malice through the cult chief's ritual grounds and the church, with Malice trying to make appropriate use of the situation, is a special delight to Haitians. The dialogue between Bouki and Malice's behind is also regarded as very humorous.

[5] Known in virtually all Negro communities in the Americas, the tale of eating the honey (or butter, pork, or lard) seems to have come to the New World by way of Africa, although it is also known in Europe.

[6] The theme of the singing tortoise (or other animal, or an object such as a skull) has appeared in folk tales ranging from West Africa through the Americas to the Far East. This Haitian variant bears a striking resemblance to a tortoise story from the Gold Coast (Ghana). In the Gold Coast variant the tortoise asks the hunter who finds him to keep his singing ability a secret, but the hunter has to tell about his discovery. When the village headman hears about it, he calls for a test. The tortoise refuses to sing, and the hunter is punished. Then the tortoise sings his song, which emphasizes the hunter's bad faith. The philosophical tone of the Haitian tortoise's songs, particularly the last one, is quite similar. The last line of the song is from a Haitian proverb.

CHAPTER 17: *Children's World: Gage Songs and Games* (*pp. 185–188*)

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[1] The description of this game is from Paul, "Les Jeux à gage," *Bulletin du Bureau d'Ethnologie*, July, 1947, p. 5.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

Nor is it sufficient to label *Duvalierisme* "pathological" or "paranoid." The roots of this ideology are to be found in Haiti, not elsewhere; its supporters are the product of Haitian times and ideas; and their social identity, while not entirely clear, would probably pose few enigmas if enough data were available.* In order to make clear these assertions, however, it is necessary to look again at Haitian society, the Haitian society Leyburn has described so well, and to reexamine the terms that have been used by him and by others to describe it. 642 [114] 174

Though the societies of the Caribbean Sea differ significantly from each other, many of them share certain general historical experiences. Unlike the colonial areas of the Old World, these islands were largely populated from abroad, and in this regard they resemble the Atlantic lowland areas of mainland America. However, the colonial history of the islands meant that they would long remain the instruments of policy formulated in foreign capitals. Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and other islands were, during most of their postconquest history, the outposts of far-flung colonial empires, and the design of their societies was conditioned by this dependence and subjugation. As "plantation islands," their agriculture, demography, mode of settlement, and social structure were attuned to metropolitan needs and objectives. Unlike most of Africa and Asia, the Antilles lost their native populations almost entirely, owing to enslavement, overwork, disease, and war, early in the era of conquest and settlement. There remained the vestiges of native traditions, assimilated into the new, growing cultures of the postconquest period. The Indians themselves, wherever they were able to survive, were also assimilated through interbreeding with Old World migrants. 175 171 648 [161] [177] [563] 174

The newcomers came from Europe, Africa, and Asia, bringing with them what they could of their ancestral traditions, but never able to transfer their social heritages as intact bodies of belief and behavior. Hence the cultures of the new Caribbean societies were built up out of elements originating in many different places, while their social forms took shape under conditions of colonial control. The peoples of the islands were able to maintain some continuities with 175 171 167

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* One interpreter of the Haitian political scene (Bastien, 1961:243–48) has suggested that Leyburn's analysis of Haitian society as a "two-caste" system greatly influenced local political thinking by strengthening one idea: "the black intellectual must regain political power for the benefit of the country's majority."

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966

SV3 Haiti SV3

The people of the islands were able to maintain some continuities with
17 the past, even while the new setting and changing conditions led to
the development of certain innovations in society and culture. In a
few Caribbean societies, Haiti included, freedom brought with it the
opportunity to create a yeomanry—an independent, landholding
class of agriculturists who produced most of their own consumption
needs and also produced commodities for sale. These were "reconstituted
yeomen," whose ways of life combined elements from the
African and American Indian past, as well as considerable European
and Asian influences, in new cultural constellations.

● 177 Haitian country folk are a particularly good example of such a
231 historical process. The crops Haitian yeomen cultivate include the
241 maize, sweet potatoes, and manioc of the indigenous American Indian
412 (Taino) people, and other cultigens such as papaya and avocado
which had been domesticated in mainland aboriginal America; and
items like taro and mangoes from Oceania, sesame and sugarcane
which originated in the Middle East and India, and vegetables from
Europe. Their domestic animals, including cattle, swine, and fowls,
are nearly all from the Old World. The chief agricultural tools—
hoe, billhook, and dibble, which are well adapted to Haiti's shallow
topsoil and hilly terrain—may be European or African in origin; the
practice of burning off weeds before planting may be African or
American Indian. In the case of each trait—crop, tool, practice—one
is confronted by the diverse and entangled culture history of the
177 Haitian people. What is true of agriculture is true of all else. The religion
771 of Haiti is at once two religions rather than one: Catholicism
19 *and* vodoun. Yet these two belief systems form a single ideology for
most Haitians, particularly in the rural areas and among those of the
urban lower classes. The Creole language is similarly complex in
origin. While its lexicon is predominantly derived from French,
parts of its syntax are not of Romance origin. For instance, the use of
postpositive nominalizing particles and the absence of gender typify
Haitian Creole, and are decidedly not Romance in character. Terminology
shows much the same; for example, animal names and anatomical
terms are mainly French in origin, but some cooked foods
carry names of African provenience.

177 The "mixing" of various elements of culture from different traditions
174 is, of course, neither uniquely Caribbean nor uniquely Haitian.
All cultures are growths out of the past, and change by losing and
gaining traits and by combining and recombining their substance in

new ways. The virtual extirpation of indigenous culture, however, 177
occurred in few areas outside the New World; it was particularly 174
characteristic of the coastal and lowland areas of this hemisphere.
Hence, Caribbean culture is almost entirely transplanted and recently 177
synthesized. In the Caribbean area, an additional distinction lay in the 174
persistently colonial character of the islands and in the effects of this
colonialism on local life. Wherever the plantation flourished, large 563
populations of African origin grew out of the original importations of
slaves. This was true from the southern United States to Brazil, but
was especially marked in the islands, where local populations of European
extraction were either absent or reduced by the spread of the
plantation. Only in Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Santo Domingo, and in 171
some of the smaller islands that developed no plantation system, were 563
substantial proportions of Europeans to be found. In Haiti, the early 174
cultural admixture of Colonial Spanish and Indian was soon swamped
by the cultures of Africa, and the European cultural component became
predominantly French after 1697, when the western third of
Hispaniola—today's Haiti—was ceded to France.

But Haitian society did not come to be purely African, in any 174
sense, nor is that society more than broadly similar to the other societies 177
of the Caribbean. The kind of society in which the French
masters and their African slaves met and mixed, and the subtropical, 178
colonial environment in which they lived, imposed their own conditions
for culture growth. What the Haitian people could keep as a
living part out of the African past was limited by the regimen of
slave plantation life; what they could borrow or copy from their
masters was affected by the nature of the social relationships between
those who held power and those who had to bend to it. Ultimately,
independence meant that the Haitian people could employ what they
already knew and practiced under slavery, but in a wholly new
social setting.

The substantial isolation that followed independence led to slowed 175
change, both social and cultural, and to the gradual spread of the yeoman 177
way of life throughout rural Haiti. From 1804 until the United 178
States occupation, Haiti was probably less affected by external developments 171
than any other country in the hemisphere. In this regard,
its social history is noticeably different from that of the other Caribbean
islands, some of which, like Puerto Rico and Cuba, were forcibly
brought back into the mainstream of world developments in the

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175 same century in which Haiti withdrew. The yeomanry of Haiti in
● 177 the nineteenth century was hence able to develop a traditionalism of
178 unusual firmness and persistence.

171 This traditionalism, however, has had a high price. The economic
productivity of the rural cultivator has not risen; it can be argued
433 convincingly that poor land use, erosion, and population growth
311 have meant lower levels of consumption for the common people in
161 1966 than obtained a hundred years or more ago. The rural masses,
565 though overwhelmingly consisting of landholders, have been unable
-178 to break out of a stagnation that is economic as well as cultural. Such
-175 stasis has been based to some extent on the limited responsiveness of
the rural folk to outside stimulus. But also important in maintaining
114 the past is the national institutional system that took on its character-
511 istic shape after 1804, and under which the rural masses still live. That
system, the origins of which Leyburn has examined and assessed with
such care, is controlled, as we have seen, by a numerically small segment of the national population that is markedly distinct from the
yeomanry itself.

-565 The nature and internal differentiation of the elite needs much more study, though it seems clear already that it is by no means a single solidary class embracing all but the yeomen. Whatever the structure of the elite, the relationship between the yeomen on the one hand and the real holders of power on the other must be understood if one is to understand Haiti. The yeoman is defined in terms of the elite; he is dependent upon it and subject to it. This is what is meant when it is said that the yeomanry, like the elite, forms only a part-society. Yet without the yeomen, there would be no elite. The elite live by controlling and taxing the rural masses, and find their sustenance and their power in rural productivity. Elite and yeomen, then, are bound together in unequal but interdependent relationships in Haiti as they are in other less developed societies of a similar kind. In such cases, the political role of the yeomanry is usually minor, and few opportunities may arise for the expansion of its political strength.
565 If the yeomanry fails to increase its productivity in ways that enable it
-433 to control more of its own surpluses, its role in affecting national po-
664 litical decisions may grow narrower rather than wider, and this omi-
642 nous possibility has become a worldwide phenomenon. It becomes
more intensified wherever industry and trade grow, unaccompanied
by parallel growth in yeoman productivity or in new and more
widely representative national institutions.

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311 bean country, and perhaps fewer than in any country in Latin Amer-
423 ica. The agriculture itself, with the exceptions now of those very few
171 large-scale plantations in sisal and sugarcane, is adapted to small plots
and is worked with intensive labor and few tools on hilly land. Com-
433 pared with agricultural production, especially of cash crops, in most
178 mainland Latin American countries, productivity is low. The yeo-
manry is conservative in its agricultural practices, and not ready to
change unless the changes entail minimal risk and the gains to be real-
241 ized are clearly demonstrable (Erasmus, 1952:20–26). Yeomen culti-
● 177 vate with three goals in mind: cash income from world-market
185 commodities (for instance, coffee, sisal, vetiver); cash income from
434 items produced for local sale and consumption; and subsistence.
While they are heavily involved in production for sale, their crop
choices and land-use patterns rest fundamentally on a subsistence
orientation. All grow a substantial part of their own food, especially
sorghum, maize, sweet potatoes, taro, manioc, malanga (*Xanthosoma
sagittifolium* Schott), plantains and bananas, fruits and vegetables, and
423 rice where possible. The land is invested with considerable affect:
823 gods live in it; it is the ultimate security against privation; family
471 members are buried in it; food and wealth come from it; and it is
good in itself, even if not cultivated. While such attitudes are com-
mon in yeoman societies, Haiti's history of slavery, and of access to
land through revolution, has given a special symbolic significance to
landowning. Land is valued above all else and is sometimes held "un-
economically"—that is, even when the capital and labor power to
work it are lacking.

114 Leyburn describes better than any other writer the history of land
175 acquisition by the yeoman after 1804. The French plantations lay in
423 ruins, never to recover, while early authoritarian attempts to restore
the prerevolutionary economy under native Haitian leadership soon
failed. In the course of a century, the Haitian people laid claim to their
own soil, while population growth and the adoption of the French
tradition of equal inheritance progressively reduced the average size
of holdings. In spite of some plantation development after the United
States occupation, most agricultural land in Haiti is still employed in
small holdings, and "land reform" in the conventional sense—the
breaking-up of large estates and the creation of a class of small land-
462 holders—is nearly irrelevant to Haiti's needs.

473 As today's yeomanry cultivates, so its womenfolk market. Nearly

any usual measure. But Haitians do produce by traditional craft methods 463
a surprisingly large number of the articles they need for daily life.
In the countryside it is possible to see many persons engaged, mostly
on a part-time basis, in craft activities and home industry that have [282]
their roots in the prerevolutionary era. Leatherworkers operating [339]
small, crude tanneries still flourish. Charcoal-burners, and operators [325]
of small lime kilns that produce building material, are found in every [322]
village. Smiths make and repair simple tools, working with forges of [326]
archaic design. Combs are made from cows' horns and tortoiseshell, [313]
buttons from bone; carrying-bags, fish traps, and a wide variety of [322]-
baskets from withes, bamboo strips, and grasses; wooden bowls,
mortars and pestles, tool handles and spoons from local woods; dippers,
pots, and candelabra from tin cans; and sandals from tires and
inner tubes. Sawyers cut and dress timber; cabinetmakers still manufacture
simple furniture of traditional design from the fast-disappearing
tropical woods; many women, working either with the simplest [294]
sorts of sewing machines or by hand, make clothing for use and for [396]
sale. Along the coasts there are dugout-makers, shipbuilders, and sail- 435
and seine-makers. Simple mattresses, fabricated from local grasses, [352]
are sold in every large marketplace, as are crude ceramic wares made [415]
by local potters. At the start of the twentieth century, Italian immigrants 465-
brought a sturdy tradition of cobbling to Haiti, which has [294]-
been destroyed only recently by the flood of American imported [177] ●
shoes with their attached prestige. until recently, *vitièle* was a colloquial [291]
term for shoe, coming from the name of the most famous of
those Italian cobblers.

One of the striking features of Haiti's craft traditions is its relative 463-
stability since the revolution. It was under slavery that Haitians first 177
became "westernized," learning what were then standard French 178
craft practices, adjusted to local colonial conditions, probably with 257
some modifying features coming from the African past. It was before 274
the revolution that the Haitian people learned and stabilized their
consumer tastes, agricultural and craft standards, and work procedures.
Such preferences and standards were worked out primarily in
terms of the demands of the plantation regime itself; but even the
most repressive social system leaves some opportunity for acculturation.
Today's sugar-making shops and rural rum distilleries employ
techniques centuries old and little modified over time. Housebuilding 342
and woodworking techniques in the countryside are substantially 322-
178-

342 322 unchanged from an earlier era. The prevailing quality of Haitian 178 rural and craft industry, then, is one of great stability and conservatism. *

493 At the same time, of course, major events since the revolution have 463 left their imprint on this part of life. Hardly a roadside village in Haiti today, for instance, lacks an automobile mechanic, even though these men are mostly self-educated and work with hardly any tools. Their skills became part of Haitian culture in this century and are of- 383 ten of a simple order no longer typical of more developed areas. Tire tubes, for instance, are "vulcanized" by the use of an ingenious de- ● 177 vice made from a board and an old piston, kerosene providing the heat to make the seal; this technique, along with the sewing of damaged truck tires, was almost certainly introduced and diffused by the United States Marines.

47 But these quaint additions do not alter the fact that shop and fac- 31 tory industry are nearly absent, and extractive industry virtually non- 178 existent. Haiti's one alumina extraction enterprise, foreign-owned, is now shut down. There is but one flour mill, and that is foreign- [258] owned as well. One or two textile mills and sugar factories, estab- [339] lished with foreign capital, still function, as do a modern cement factory and a few other small plants established in the 1950s. These [464] industries, scanty as they are, were of great importance to Haiti, since they represented substantial investments, held out the promise of reduced dependence on imports in significant categories, and contributed to the beginnings of an industrial proletariat. However, they involved only a tiny fraction of the national labor force, and they have not proved entirely successful. As a result, Haiti lacks any reserve of labor acquainted with modern industry, even though many people, both urban and rural, work at tasks that might be considered more industrial than agricultural.

47 Most important for the present discussion, the minor developments 433 in Haitian industry have not led to an expanded market and have not 178 resulted in any firm increase in productivity. Industrial growth, in 171 the sense in which it has occurred in countries such as those of Western Europe—or for that matter in Mexico or Argentina—is entirely lacking. The absence of such growth is perhaps especially significant if Haiti be compared with a neighbor such as Jamaica or Puerto Rico. [648] These countries, one now independent, the other a North American dependency—have both gained real increments from the investment activities of outsiders;

175 work until noon. A two-hour siesta followed, but from two until
566 sunset there was steady work. Only after evening prayers was the
512 worker free. During the day no cultivator might leave his task except
466 for direst need. The lame and the halt were not required to till the fields, but must carry around buckets of drinking water, take care of the children, and do odd jobs about the estate.

175 Christophe made a steady and, in the main, successful effort to
566 explain to the people the necessity of hard work on the plantation.
466 As with the noblemen, the serfs knew precisely what was expected of them, and why. Their regimentation was strict, but understandable. It was clearly stipulated that if a worker shirked his job he was to be put in prison and made to do forced labor there. Laziness in the fields was to be punished by strokes from the overseer's liane. Hard and steady work was demanded during the whole thirteen years of Christophe's rule, but only rarely was there complaint, as there had been constantly under Dessalines, of cruelty on the part of overseers.

175 The quarter part of the total crop of any plantation was to go to
465 the workers as wages, and, since production increased and prices rose, this quarter which they were free to spend as they pleased provided a powerful incentive to further industry. As compared with anything they had known before, the workers were now recipients of an ample income. On the plantations they cultivated
[423] the money crops of sugar and coffee. In addition, each family had
[241] its own garden plot on which to raise the food crops—yams, plantains, beans, and bananas—for personal use.[9]

175 Christophe was so far ahead of his time that he tried to introduce
177 British methods of agriculture into his kingdom. The results were
407 insignificant. The plough, although obviously superior in efficiency
178 to the hoe, eliminated the sociable companionship of working in unison, and demanded horses and mules which the country lacked. The innovations were consequently too radical to be accepted. In the main, the agricultural methods of the kingdom continued to be those familiar in slave days.

175 Thirteen years of careful direction can fix many patterns of social
178 routine. One of Christophe's rules was that no cultivator attached to

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[241] [9] The staples of other countries, such as Irish potatoes, wheat, barley, and oats, did not flourish in Haiti. On the large plantations, indigo and cotton, which had been money crops in the French régime, were generally neglected, as they had been in the time of Dessalines.

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One of Christophe's rules was that no cultivator
attached to a plantation—and every ordinary country person was so attached 175
—might leave the estate without permission from a military officer.[10] 566
Two of the common folkways of Haitian peasant life since his time 178
have been immobility and general accepeance of orders from the
military. Both characteristics had been fostered by slavery and by [484]
the régimes of Toussaint and Dessalines, and these folkways became
fixed under Christophe.

Other rules introduced by the King, however, lapsed shortly after 175
his strong hand was removed. For example, the monarch required of 178
the whole population that whenever they visited the capital on feast 291
days or went to the market towns on Saturdays they be decently clad 527
in clean clothes.[11] Since the time of Christophe, neatness of appear- 183
ance has hardly been a folk characteristic, probably because of
poverty rather than lack of desire to dress well. Nor did scrupulous [441]
regularity of work in the fields continue as a folkway later, when the
great plantations were broken up.

Like a father the King tried to inculcate moral standards of honesty 175
in his people. To prevent theft he had small valuables, such as watches 577
or jewelry or purses, "planted," and if the finder did not immediately 177
turn them over to the nearest Dahomet, punishment was meted out.
Such a policy made honesty contagious. Thefts and depredation were soon almost unknown. The most tempting store of wealth could be left safely unlocked or in the open air. Christophe's achievement in this matter is eloquent testimony to his success as a paternal leader, for it is no small task to initiate moral ideas among people who for a generation have lacked them. Even today it is the proud boast of the Haitians that their people are honest.

As compared with the liberties of farmers in the United States of 175
the same period, the Haitian agricultural workers' freedom was 566
infinitesimally small, but by contrast with the bondage of slavery,
their new status was definitely higher.

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[10] Christophe called his royal police force "Dahomets," after the West African kingdom, Dahomey, from which most of the men had come. They were not ordinary soldiers but especially imported and carefully selected men whose intelligence made them stand out from their fellows. Each Dahomet was given a course of training in his task as administrator before being sent out. The general consensus of foreign visitors was that these Dahomets were efficient even in small matters. [625]

[11] This rule was partly an indication of Christophe's vanity, personal and national, for he was deeply desirous of the good opinion of white visitors, especially those from England. He wanted Europeans to respect Haiti as they would respect any small state, and not to praise it merely as an example of "Negro progress." [577] [186]

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American Marines in Haiti during the next two decades had definite 128
effects upon the social life of the country. 649

One of the most immediately observable results was the termina- 175
tion of the long political domination by the blacks, and reëstablish- 648
ment of the colored élite in government control. The four presidents
since 1915, Dartiguenave (1915–22), Borno (1922–30), Roy (1930), 643
and Vincent (1930–41), have all been light-skinned. The United 563
States forces had a definite hand in the election of the first two of these men. America's concern was certainly not to return the government to the colored group, but rather to have as titular heads of state men who were educated, temperate of mind, civil in manners—and, of course, mentally "supple" enough to carry out policies agreeable to the State Department at Washington. Since education had for long been a perquisite of the élite only, and since colored élite outnumbered black élite, the chances were good that the choice should fall upon a colored man in 1915 and 1922. Even so, it may have been pure coincidence that the Americans supported mulattoes rather than Negroes; it can hardly be coincidence that the mulatto presidents since 1915 have filled the key offices with colored men. They would assuredly maintain that they had tried to select persons best fitted for office. The fact remains that there are few blacks in the important ministries.

This return to political power of the colored element was one of the most sweeping transformations effected by the Marines, for once again, as in the golden days of Pétion and Boyer, political prestige accompanied and fortified social position. Since 1843 one black or almost black general had succeeded another as president of the republic, and the élite class had perforce to endure them. Socially tolerated these parvenu generals had been, but accepted never. When the Marines arranged the election of President Dartiguenave they effectively reversed the tradition of a century. Since 1915 there have been several Negro candidates for the presidency; in coming elections there are sure to be others; for the present and the near future it is safe to say there will be no more black non-élite presidents.

Such a prophecy is made with a certain assurance because of an- 175
other result of the Occupation: reform of the army. All true friends 701
of Haiti know, as most Haitian statesmen had understood for a 648
hundred years, that the huge standing army was an unmitigated
burden to the economic, political, and social stability of the country. 177

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701 Since it was an entrenched interest, however, no responsible statesman
648 had dared to threaten its hold. The Marines swept it out of
● 177 existence, undertaking to substitute for it a trained constabulary of
825 only 2,000 men who should combine routine military tasks with
652 police duty in the scattered towns. Results were immediately apparent:
669 the weighty incubus of soldiers' wages was lifted from the treasury; thousands of men were deprived of sinecures and put back into productive economic activities; the constant threat of armed revolution was removed; better order was kept by 2,000 trained men in trim uniform than by twelve times that number of ragged loafers who called themselves soldiers; and since the army was no longer the great steppingstone to political office, the élite felt more secure from assault by ambitious but uneducated army men. From 1843 to 1915 the élite had endured many lower-caste presidents because these were able to control the army; now the army had disappeared.

175 The Marines did much that was of indisputable benefit to Haiti.
648 This was acknowledged even by the most vocal patriots who soon
[743] began to campaign for an end of the Occupation. Where there had been no real work in public health, Americans now built hospitals,
[744] established clinics, cleaned up the sources of many diseases, laid down
[365] sewage systems, gave the towns pure water. In 1915 there were only three automobiles in the country, and no roads for them to travel;
[491] the Americans built many miles of paved roads. In 1915 there had been only one wharf, two short stretches of railroad, two lighthouses,
[45] one electric plant; the Americans undertook electrification, telephone systems, the construction of administration buildings, and other public conveniences. Whether in such visible matters or in the obscurer realms of currency, banking, and budgets hardly a phase of daily life was left untouched. And judged by the standards of civilization the Marines improved what they touched.

175 But rancor against the Americans began early and continued to
648 the bitter end in 1934. The pride of all Haitians was deeply wounded
642 by the Occupation. For 111 years they had governed themselves and had assumed themselves to be a sovereign nation; the Marines patrolling the countryside were vivid reminders that Haiti had never been independent except by sufferance, and that white men were once more overrunning the dominion of colored and Negro men. Nevertheless, the reasons proclaimed for opposing the Occupation were not those of hurt vanity. Some of those given were entirely

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reported in Haiti that although they joined patriotically in the cheering 175
when the Marines embarked in 1934, many of them shed tears to 458
see the departure of 2,000 monthly salaries, most of which had been
enriching the local tills. Indeed, the country came much closer to
establishing a mercantile middle class during the Occupation than
ever before. The only real control left behind by the Americans was [648]
an overseer of the national budget, destined to leave as soon as Haiti's
external debt was finally paid off. To that end the government saved [652]
rather than spent, so that businessmen found no comfort in the state
of economic affairs, particularly during a decade of world depression
and European disturbance. Nationalist economic theories in Europe
have upset Haitian markets, so that the élite thriftily save their pensions
against hard times instead of spending them freely on present
luxuries. The American overseer of the budget withdrew in 1941.

At many points the forces of the Occupation touched unwittingly 175
upon deep-rooted prejudices of the Haitian people. In order to 648
secure laborers for road construction the Marines revived an old 466
corvée law of Christophe's time, requiring forced labor on public
works at the need of the government. Many of the ill-nourished 669
peasants were taxed beyond their physical powers by work on the 653
roads, so that an armed revolt by caco guerrillas broke out. Its suppression
required months of time and cost many lives, leaving in its
train a great deal of ill will.

The efficient Americans also came to grief when they attempted to 175
make Haitians orderly in the American way. Land titles were in 648
chaos, as we have noted. American experts wished to find a basis for 423
internal taxation, so that economic reform might be effective and
permanent. The effort to have people declare their claims so that
these might be properly registered had to be given up after a few
weeks, for the peasant owners knew without written deeds their
local boundaries, and among the squatters those who realized their
title might not stand under strict investigation were understandably
averse to having questions of property tenure raised by the authorities
of an alien and interfering government.

Wherever Marine barracks were located, there were centres of a 175
cultural dissemination which was bound in the long run to affect 648
Haitian ideas and practices. Automobiles, radios, amusements, even
the daily conversation of the Marines, all left their mark upon a 177
people who had been effectively isolated from the world for more
than a century.

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sive mood, will speak of the peasant and his contributions to Haiti; 175
he thinks only in terms of his own caste.[8] Upper-class Haitians dread 178
the sight of tourists taking pictures of native scenes, fearing that the 565
travelers will return to their own country and label these pictures, 829
"Typical Haitian Scenes," when, as anyone should know, typical
Haiti is upper-class Haiti.[9]

The American Occupation failed of many of its ends because it did 175
not recognize the social situation and its implications; or, realizing 648
them, did not consider them worthy of attention. Roads, telephones, 177
mail service, and improved agricultural methods seemed patently
desirable to progressive Americans; to install them for the Haitians
seemed generously wise. Yet many well-meant efforts came to grief,
for the mass of people, lacking a tradition of orderly free government, did not always understand what the Americans were about,
while the élite saw in the activities of the Marines a threat to their
own dominance as rulers of the country.[10]

The antiquated, but prevalent, notion of the superior mentality of 563
the white race also flourishes in certain quarters among the élite. 829
Many of them say that the Negro can never originate a civilization,
and that with the best of education he remains an inferior man,
utterly unfitted for government, utterly incapable of making progress.

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[8] Witness Marthe Oulié's paragraph (*Les Antilles, filles de France* [Paris, 1935], [114]
p. 314): "My amiable host (a member of the élite) was triumphant at my surprise and [829]
enchantment. 'You did not expect to find a civilized country. What have the spiteful
wits told you? That the Haitians worshipped serpents and made human sacrifices?
True, the peasants on the mountain-sides are still very primitive and ignorant, but in
the cities you will find many families like ours, cultivated in letters and music, careful
and proud of their French culture, and obstinately set against American de-civilization.'"

[9] "Should you like a European to take pictures of the slums of your American cities and of the most degraded of your share-croppers, and then circulate these photographs as typical American scenes?" asked one sensitive Haitian.

[10] See the *Report of the Forbes Commission to Haiti*, 1930, pp. 18-19. "Illiteracy keeps [114]
the peasant masses politically inarticulate, except in case of mobs or bandit gangs, [648]
which formerly infested the countryside and often furnished the forces of revolution.
These bandit gangs have been broken up and have disappeared under American rule,
but the social forces that created them still remain—poverty, ignorance, and the lack
of a tradition or desire for orderly free government. It has been the aim of the American Occupation to try to broaden the base of the articulate proletariat and thus make
for a sounder democracy and ultimately provide for a more representative government in Haiti. Hence its work in education, in sanitation, in agencies of communication such as roads, telephones, telegraph lines, and regular mail routes. These things
naturally are deemed of secondary importance by the Élite, who see in the rise of a
middle class a threat to the continuation of their own leadership."

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In most countries in which Westerners are familiar, social dis- 565
tinctions take the form of classes, which are to a greater or less degree 178
mutable. In Haiti, as we have repeatedly indicated, the distinctions are so rigid that caste is the only properly descriptive term. There is hardly a Haitian who would not be able to state immediately whether he or any person he knew was, or was not, élite. So it has been with steady persistence ever since Dessalines and Christophe gave way to Pétion and Boyer. Élite youth marries élite girl, and the folkways of the group are passed on from parent to children, thus perpetuating the distinctions. In the pages which follow, all the marks of separation of castes will be examined: religion, economic occupation, marriage, language, manners, and the rest.

Certain aspects of the classic example of the caste system, seen in
India, are lacking in Haiti. Religion, for instance, does not require [564]
caste endogamy, nor does civil law implicitly acknowledge caste [170]
lines by reference to the rights of people of a certain occupation. Custom does more than religion and law could, however, to enforce conformity to the understood rules. Probably the most open efforts to enact caste lines into law were the pronouncements of Dessalines and Christophe that all but a few people should be bound to the soil; and Boyer's Code Rural—a feeble echo of days gone by. The two black rulers were able to enforce the distinctions they made; but when they died their feudal arrangements lapsed, while the separation of classes continued. With the recurrence of revolutions after 1843 it behooved the élite, when occasionally they were in authority, not to lay themselves open to fresh attack upon grounds of aristocratic presumption, for they never knew when they might need the support of the masses. Any black revolutionary leader would have been able to turn an enacted caste law to his own ends, even if a Senate consisting predominantly of light-colored men had had the power to enact such a law. Time and inertia won the battle for the élite. By not joining issue with the masses at any definite point, the aristocrats gained their end of caste distinction, for they were willing to endure the self-discipline necessary to the maintenance of social standards, as the masses were not.

Just as in colonial days the ambition of the well-to-do freedman 565
was to go to France for his education and his holidays, so in free 484
Haiti the lure of France has continued to be strong for the aristocrat.
There is not a trace of animosity against the country which enslaved 177
the Negroes, and which in 1802–3 tried by trickery to take away the 186

565 484 • 177 186 rights of people of Negro blood. As a distinguished Haitian remarked, "It is from France that we draw our culture, our language, our literature, our attitudes of mind: why should we not love her?" The more time the élite spend in France, the less kinship they feel with the masses. There is not necessarily any conscious snobbery in this increasing discrepancy; it simply results from a life spent in entirely different environments. The Boston Brahmin, for example, may be kindhearted and yet feel little kinship with a Mississippi share-cropper.

564 Inside the castes one may find social distinctions familiar in democracies. There are well-to-do élite who set the standards of manners and entertainment, and there are peasant landholders who through force of personality dominate their rural neighborhoods. The intellectual man of the upper classes stands somewhat apart from the social whirl of "high society." An important government official has more prestige among the leisured classes than a small businessman, just as a powerful religious adept is more honored among the peasants than a happy-go-lucky ragamuffin. It is obvious, however, that within the élite caste social discrimination occurs more frequently and is more accurately observed than among the country people.

[184] [771] [208] Such phrases as "Haitian religion" or "Haitian public opinion" are accurate only in so far as the person who uses them defines the adjective "Haitian." One might describe truly a phenomenon characteristic of ninety-five out of a hundred Haitians and yet, in the opinion of those who dominate the economic, political, and social life, do injustice to Haiti.

114 771 This was recognized in colonial times by Moreau de Saint-Méry, who wrote: "According to the Arada Negroes, the real followers of *Vaudoux* in the colony, . . . *Vaudoux* signifies an all-powerful and supernatural being on whom depend all the events which come to pass on this earth."[5]

771 Vodun is a true religion, in the same sense that Mohammedanism, Buddhism, or Christianity are all true religions. That is to say, it is a set of beliefs and practices which claim to deal with the spiritual forces of the universe, and attempt to keep the individual in harmonious relation with them as they affect his life. The word "superstition" is relative. It is a subjective term, being generally applied to beliefs which we consider ourselves too wise, too advanced, to cling to. The sophisticated skeptic calls the belief in miracles superstition; the Christian regards the reverence for certain animals in India superstition: it is all a matter of view. Using the greatest number of criteria available for the definition of religion as distinct from vague superstition, religion may be said to be a set of beliefs about spirits or gods and their nature, about the origin of the world, about good and evil, about man's relation to the universe he knows; it includes a set of practices of worship; it is an attempt to ward off misfortune and to get good; it treats of what happens after death; it is a system of seeking security, solace, and support in the face of a supposed supernatural.[6]

Vodun is all of these.

771 • 177 Like any other vital religion which has spread from its original centre, endured through the years, and come into contact with other faiths, Vodun is not at the present what it was in its early days. Like others it has unconsciously borrowed—and in borrowing, transformed—ideas, concepts, practices, rites.[7] The greatest single influence exerted upon it has been that of the Roman Catholic Church with which the people have had continuous dealings, increasing in recent years, for more than a century and a half. Many aspects of

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[5] In his *Description . . . de la partie française de . . . Saint-Domingue*, I, 46.

[6] This alliterative phrase was suggested as a partial definition of religion by Prof. Raymond Kennedy.

[7] It need hardly be pointed out that Christianity is no longer the simple faith taught by Jesus, but a composite of that faith with scholarly theology, absorbed local practices, mysteries which flourished in the Roman Empire, secular philosophy—and, to put it briefly, the accretions of changing time. Similarly, Buddhism is more than the doctrines of Gautama, and Mohammedanism more (and less) than Mohammed taught.

Vodun, therefore, show the Catholic influence, exerted in the main 771
unconsciously. 171

Unlike the great religions, Vodun lacks a formal theology. As has 794
been said, no seminary exists for the training of priests and priestesses, 771
no congress or college of fathers states or amends the creed; there is no church court to discipline the individual enthusiast, or catechism for the young; no scriptures or sermons are printed or read to strengthen the faith. Vodun is an informal religion of action, not a formal one of reason. It flourishes because it is malleable, adaptive, suited to the needs of a people living close to nature and without education. To give a single lucid description of this Haitian folk religion, created as it is by everybody and by nobody, is about as possible as to give one description of home life, which varies according to the couple. We may, however, outline the common elements of creed and practice.

2. *Formative Days*

To say casually that Vodun is African in origin is to say little more 771
than that it does not stem from the great world religions. There is no 174
unity in Africa today; there was still less in the eighteenth century when slaves were being imported into Haiti. At that period it was possible to find a new dialect and a different set of folkways every few miles along the western seacoast. Two slaves from one geographical region (the Gold Coast, for example) might not understand each other or have the slightest predisposition to sympathize with each other's customs.

Colonial planters experimented with slaves from various regions 175
in Africa, just as they might compare breeds of horses; setting tracta- 567
bility off against originality, brute strength against skill, intelligence against health. In this quest for a perfect slave, Negroes were imported from all parts of the Dark Continent, from Senegal in the northwest around the five thousand miles of seacoast to Mozambique and Madagascar in the east. Partly because trading conditions were more favorable in the Dahomey and Congo regions, and partly because the qualities of Dahomean and Congolese were preferred, Negroes from these two sections soon came to predominate over others in the colony. Whereas "Congo" was merely a geographical term, implying no community of feeling among the natives living

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for Vodun theology, nor any established order for the service, 771
variety is one of its chief characteristics. Impossible as it is to cite a definitive list of Vodun beliefs, those most generally held might be combined into a Creed, which would run about as follows:

> I believe in scores of gods and spirits, guardians of earth and sky, and of all things visible and invisible;
>
> I believe that all these vodun (who are called "loa" or "mystères") are potent, although less majestic than *le bon Dieu* of the Christians; that some of them came with our ancestors from our former home in Africa, while others we have learned about in our Haitian fatherland; that these loa have power to possess us, their worshipers, informing us by inspiration of their needs and desires, which we must faithfully satisfy; that these loa, like us, are capable of good and evil, gentleness and anger, mercy and revenge;
>
> I believe in the efficacy of sacrifice; in the pleasures of living; in respect due to twins; in the careful cult of the dead, who may return to our abodes; in the spiritual causation of diseases and misfortune; in the dance through which we may be "mounted" by our loa; in the possibility of interfering with the normal flow of events by means of magic; in the efficacy of charms and spells; and in the Holy Catholic Church.

Those who conceive of religion in terms of a rigid orthodoxy, 771
monotheism, sin, a moral law, eternal rewards or punishments, will 177
not understand Haitian Vodun. It is as hospitable to new spiritual
conceptions as any faith could be, requiring only that the additions 776
be applicable to life as it is lived in the Haitian hills and valleys, and that they adapt their shape and terminology to the native penchant. Monotheism is rarely the practical belief of simple people, but rather of prophets and scholars. It is easy enough to believe in an all-powerful god but much more difficult to arrive at a conception of a unique God. In Dahomey the people had reached some such stage of belief in omnipotence but not of uniqueness. When later, in slavery, transplanted Africans heard the Catholic doctrine of a god who ruled creation by the fiat of his conquering will, they assimilated the idea with a significant change: the Christian God became the Great Master of the other gods. The slaves very simply placed Him at the
head of their pantheon. Even today, the first words of a Vodun [796]
service are the request for permission from the Great Master to go on 114
with the service. As Dorsainvil says: 178

> This term chosen to designate the supreme God was imposed on them by 776
> their environment. The colonist, the master, incarnated for the slave the

787 proper control, as they should be. If an unwanted god persists in
114 mounting an individual, the pertinacious one is commanded to go
away or the victim himself is sent home until he can recover his own
personality. Many people strongly resist possession when it is imminent. Judged by our own standards, possession of the Vodun variety could certainly not be called normal; judged by Haitian standards, however, it would be absurd to call abnormal an experience known and approved by the majority of the community.[29]

776 Possession occurs either at the service or at the dance. Here again
535 the white man has nothing in his religious experience to enable him
787 to comprehend the pattern of Haitian religion. The service corresponds nearly enough to the Catholic Mass or to more realistic sacrifices in ancient Jewish rites, but neither of these faiths nor any other the white man knows well has dancing for religion's sake. In Vodun, however, the dance is of equal importance with the service.

778 In the tiny *houmfort* (also spelled *houmfor*) of the priest, which is
346 little more than a hut with earthen floor, the service begins. To call
776 this structure a temple is at once to make it too imposing and to confuse the white man in his attempt to understand the scene; it is no more of a temple than was a tiny primitive early Christian church. Most houmforts in Haiti would be crowded if twenty people were present. At one end is an altar, more or less resembling the high altar in a Catholic chapel; on it are placed a crucifix, flowers, candles, fruit and food, wine, lithographs of Catholic saints, and whatever other objects, Catholic or Vodun, local practice may dictate and individual taste prefer. Upon the floor are traced formal cabalistic patterns, generally in corn meal, both to fend off evil influences and as required by the particular loa. The officiants may be male or female or both. To the service ordinarily come only the members of the family and their specifically invited guests; neighbors and friends will attend the subsequent dance.

776 A student of Catholicism would find in the first part of the service
788 a great deal of ritual borrowed from the Church. The blessing,
177 genuflections, making the sign of the cross, responses, and the like,
782 all clearly show a Catholic background which accords well with
787 certain objects upon the altar. Imperceptibly the strictly Vodun element obtrudes itself. The loa are asked whether they will accept

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[29] The statement of the two sides of this controversy may be found in Dorsainvil, op. cit., throughout; and in Herskovits, op. cit., particularly pp. 146–147.

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the sacrifices; food is set before the sacrificial animal, and if this food 796
is eaten by the creature or creatures, it is known that the loa is satis- 782
fied. Then comes the actual sacrifice of the animal, a slaying neither 787
ostentatious nor dramatic, since often it does not occur in the houm- 788
fort itself. It is at this juncture that possession is looked for. The loa, 177
by seizing one or more of his devotees—or, if possession fails, by the
divination of the priest—makes known his desires. The demands of
the loa are likely to be modest: a candle, a special article of food,
certain specific attentions. Occasionally he insists upon an impressive
sacrifice. Whatever his desires, they must be gratified or else the loa
will mildly harass the family; long refusal will produce anger and
full vengeance. If the god is Rada, his sacrifice will be white, red, or
vari-colored; if he is Pétro, he will wish black or gray animals—
chickens, turkeys, goats, bullocks.

The service itself, then, is entirely religious in nature, consisting
wholly of ceremonies and rituals conducted by officiating priests,
with the purpose of restraining or pacifying gods who may have
been pursuing a family with misfortune, or gratifying those who
have made it happy. The dance following the service apparently 796
expresses the joy of the family at dangers averted and gratitude for 535
blessings bestowed. [782]

In contrast to the private character of the service, the dance has all
the appearance of a social event. Invitations to it are sent all over the
countryside. People attend for good fellowship, gossip, and the sheer
delight of dancing, but in the background one is always aware of a
religious element as well. The dance is held in a specially constructed [346]
tonnelle, a roof of boughs and leaves supported by uprights. Drums [534]
are not always used at the earlier service, but no dance could be held
without them. The crowd drifts in slowly, so that the dance may be
long in getting under way. The best drummers in the community
may not arrive until after two or three hours. Three drums of
different sizes, all properly baptized, set the rhythms, and sometimes
gourd rattles embroider a commentary upon the beat. Whereas at 796
the service possession comes as a result of the priest's invocations, at 535
the dance it is inspired by the drumming. Each loa has his own 787
particular rhythm, so that as soon as it is determined what god has
seized upon a dancer the drummers take up the rhythm of that god.
The officiant immediately rushes to the mounted person with a
calabash of water and a candle; by following the "horse" around and

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and set apart on special plates in a separate room for them; in the 171
afternoon the family eats the food. If the twins to whom homage is 845
being offered are still alive, they must wear special clothes at the 787
sacrifice. [782]

"I believe in the careful cult of the dead . . ." Once more it is 761
necessary to renew one's acquaintance with primitive and folk belief
to grasp the Haitian attitude. Life is desirable, death is dreaded; both
death and the dead are feared. In the actual world, any excursion
from the comfortably familiar countryside of one's home leads to
confusion and bewilderment. Except in the company of his fellows [166]
(on a religious pilgrimage to the waterfalls at Ville-Bonheur, for
example), a Haitian almost never leaves his valley or mountainside
and market town. Sophisticated people view the unknown with [181]
pleasurable excitement, for they have learned by experience that the
unfamiliar is not necessarily frightful; it is quite the contrary with
simple folk, whose meagre experience with the unfamiliar has been
at least somewhat alarming.

Death is the ultimate unknown. The fearsomeness the imagination conceives to lie beyond death seems to exist in almost direct proportion to people's ignorance of the material world. The fear of ghosts is a commonplace among primitive folk, as among the uneducated in the "civilized" world. Where ghosts are considered powerful, one part of any comprehensive cult will certainly deal with the dead.

In Haitian Vodun the teachings of the Catholic Church have 769
exerted more influence upon the cult of the dead than upon any other 177
part of the religion. The preparation of the corpse for burial shows [764]
no traces of African practice; the watch (or wake) and wailing over
the deceased is familiar; the funeral itself is conducted by a Catholic
priest, with burial in consecrated ground. Thereafter, the continual
efforts to secure the tranquil repose of the departed bear the earmarks
of faithful Catholic practice; it is at this point, however, that the cult
begins to assume distinctive features, for it is firmly believed that the
dead exert tremendous power in the world of the living. This power
comes from God—the Christian God. The case has been put succinctly 114
by Sumner and Keller: "The relation between man and 176
ghost resolves itself . . . into a relation of rights and duties, with all 769
the rights on one side and all the duties on the other."[30] God gives

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[30] W. G. Sumner and A. G. Keller, *The Science of Society* (New Haven, 1927), II, 849.

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validity to forms and ideas which we know, in our hearts, might 171
outstrip us.[1]

The Haitian peasant is not interested in making formal distinctions. 771
If he is critical, it is only of results, rarely of the means used to obtain
those results. If he cannot gain his ends in one way he is not too
proud to try another, and still a third. Nineteen out of twenty
Haitians, then, being Roman Catholics in religion, are likewise worshipers
of Vodun. There is so much mystery in the world, so much
misfortune, beauty, sorrow, and joy that it would be unthinkable to
deny God or the gods: mankind has worship enough for them all,
and need enough of them all. There is to the peasant no conflict [778]
between Vodun and Catholicism; the two are complementary, even
if sometimes the Catholic priests make coöperation impossible.

Let us recall for a moment the earlier history of the country. In 175
the days of slavery one may imagine the Church would have found 177
it difficult, even if its priests and planters had been willing, to train 771
all the blacks as thorough Catholics. Some concepts took root, some 794
rites immediately appealed. Below the surface, however, the African
ideas of the preponderant Dahomeans were spreading through the
plantations. In the crucial early days of independence, when the
customs and social institutions of the Haitians (as Haitians, not as
expatriate slaves) were in process of formation, the country's rulers
were not deeply religious; moreover the State was in open schism
from the Church. For fifty-five years no approved churchman was
at work with the people. The seventy men whom some historians
mention as priests were on the whole venal and self-seeking, even
vicious. Their least concern was to wean the people away from their
superstitions, for precisely in these folk beliefs lay the greatest source
of gain. By the time the breach between State and Church was healed
it was too late to make single-minded Catholics of the Haitian
peasants. They would accept what the new and active priests taught
them, but not to the exclusion of what they had believed for a century.

With the élite the Church has had more success; assiduous teach- 565
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[1] This either-or dichotomy is not limited to religion: we divide ourselves similarly in politics, family life, residence, and so on. If I am a Lutheran, a Republican, a married man with a home in New York, I cannot at the same time be an Episcopalian, a Democrat, and a voter in Chicago with a second spouse and family there. What is impossible and ridiculous for Americans, however, is in some ways the normal course of life for the Haitian.

565 ing since 1860 has had in effect upon the children of the upper classes.
771 Two hundred churchmen working with a population of more than two million cannot distribute their benefits equally. Teachers must devote themselves to those whose minds are educable, who have access to schools, and who can afford time for daily classes. An element of social snobbishness entered as well. Catholicism was socially accepted in the Western World whose approval the élite coveted, where Vodun if known at all was regarded as a mere superstition. To prove his separation from the peasant black, the élite person was therefore Catholic or nothing.

[787] It would have required many times two hundred teaching brothers and sisters, all with the zeal of fanatics and the energy of dynamos, to convert the masses away from Vodun. In acquainting the peasants with Church forms and certain beliefs the priests have been entirely successful; in making exclusive Catholics of them they have had no success at all.

771 Every vital social institution is continually in a process of change.
177 Vodun, a very living faith, has steadily borrowed more and more from Catholicism, the only other religion with which the people come in close contact. When one can go from a Saturday night Vodun sacrifice and dance to a Sunday morning Catholic Mass with no feeling of incongruity, it is obvious that the minds of the worshipers are actively predisposed to assimilation of creed and ritual.

796 We have suggested in a previous chapter some traces of the Catholic Mass in Vodun ceremony. The Vodun service regularly begins with a long ritual which the observer who knows both the Créole language and the Catholic liturgy recognizes as being almost entirely Roman. While the Vodun houngan sits quietly by, a special officiant known as the *prêt' savanne* (bush priest) reads or pretends to read from the Catholic prayer book. For the Pater Noster, the creed, the Ave Maria, the Salve Regina, and the prayers, the worshipers kneel or stand as they would in church. Candles burn, water is sprinkled, the sign of the cross is made, the chants are sung. When the benediction completes this part of the service, the houngan takes over to conduct the purely African rites; yet his first words are, "*Grâce miséricorde*," and many Catholic interpolations appear even in this second part of the service.

[778] The Vodun ritual is conducted before an altar, in Haitian Créole
[192] called a "trône," which is a perfect marriage between Vodun and

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Catholicism. I have seen such an altar, with its adjacent table, bearing a crucifix, candles, (holy) water, lithographs of the "Assumption of the Virgin," "St. George and the Dragon," the "Adoration of the Kings," and certain unrecognized but distinctly European saints; in addition to these objects, however, were such unecclesiastical articles as bananas, rice, beans, squash, various bottles of drinks, and plates of food. Near by were the sacrificial animals. 1796 [178] [192]

Vodun makes use frequently of one sacrament of the Church—baptism. Needless to say, this rite is not a monopoly of Christianity, and its use in the folk religion may very well have come from Africa. Constant witnessing of the rite in church must nevertheless have influenced its adoption for all important Vodun ceremonials. The drums used in the dance are baptized; so also is the first loa to possess a devotee; at many other special times the rite is likewise performed, generally with a set of prayers which invoke Catholic saints and Vodun loa alike. [177]

Mention has already been made of the identification of Rada and Pétro loa with certain saints and martyrs of the Church. Such identifications are not uniform, but vary in different parts of the country. Legba is generally associated with Saint Anthony, but often (and to the Christian, more understandably) with Saint Peter who traditionally guards the gates of heaven; the Virgin Mary quite obviously is related, whether as Queen of Heaven, as the Sorrowing Mother, or as the innocent Virgin, with numerous manifestations of Maîtresse Erzulie; Damballa, whose symbol is the serpent, is sometimes Moses (whose brother's rod became a serpent consuming other serpents, and who by lifting up a serpent in the wilderness cured the people of their snake bites) and sometimes Saint Patrick (whose association with snakes is well known). Other identifications are numerous, showing the penchant of the people for combining what they know of both religions.[1] 776 177 [184]

Many of the loa have, like the Catholic saints, their symbols, their special days, colors, and other associations. Some like white, some red; the serpent, the rainbow, the crossroads are among the symbols; sacred days occur weekly, Tuesday being Legba's, Wednesday Ogun's, Friday Erzulie's, and Saturday Baron Samedi's. It may be

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[1] The distinguished Haitian ethnographer, sociologist, and historian, Dr. Jean Price-Mars, has made a list of some of these identifications in his *Ainsi parla l'oncle*, pp. 180–182.

776 that Catholic practice in these matters did no more than to fortify
777 an African tendency already in evidence; indeed, it is a common tendency of folk religions anywhere to associate days and colors with their honored spirits. The very similarity of conventions indicates the ease with which borrowing of religious ideas might occur.

778 Every Catholic priest is well aware of the hold Vodun has upon the people, just as all desire to see the ultimate triumph of the Church. The battle is unending, but the method of attack varies. Open firmness is the approach favored by some priests, subtle indirection by others. Sermons against Vodun do little good apparently, for the faith of the worshipers is sufficient to maintain in their own minds the validity of what the preachers inveigh against. When zealous clerics cut down trees sacred to Damballa or try otherwise to eradicate signs and symbols of the loa, the people have rarely tried to stop them; but when the slightest bad luck comes to the iconoclasts—and misfortune comes to every man sooner or later—the people are quick to interpret the stroke as the loa's punishment for the desecration of holy things. On one occasion a shrine was destroyed, the priest calling in an American officer to shoot at a supposed apparition of the Virgin: shortly thereafter the priest's house was burned to the ground, the priest himself suffered a paralytic stroke from which he never recovered, and the captain was ordered back to the United States, "as a punishment for what he had done," said the people. *Post hoc ergo propter hoc*—what followed was a direct consequence of what had gone before; this has been the basis of belief from time immemorial. Who shall say it was not cause and effect? Similar cases have been numerous. One concludes that the method of direct assault will never achieve its purpose.

Subtlety of attack, on the other hand, requires infinite patience, infinite willingness to compromise for the present. Both are qualities which the Catholic Church has amply demonstrated in times past. Certain of the priests whose parishes include country districts are masters in the art of patient indirection, willing to accept apparent failure in their lifetime in the hope of ultimate victory for the Church. Their method is to discover which Vodun practices are of prime importance and, ignoring minor beliefs and practices, slowly lure—not intellectually persuade—the people away from them. This process may be clearly illustrated by a service in the hills in 1937.

A Catholic chapel had been erected in recent years upon a hilltop

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A Catholic chapel had been erected in recent years upon a hilltop

long respected as a favorite haunt of the loa Damballa. Apparently 798
this was no slight, for Vodun gods are not monopolistic. On the hill, 796
however, once stood a tree in which a snake made his home, symbol
of Damballa. Many years earlier a forthright Catholic priest had or- 177
dered his parishioners to fell the tree, an insult direct to the loa which none of the faithful dared give. The determined cleric therefore performed the task himself, but left a sizable stump on which has now been placed a small statue of the popular Catholic Saint Anthony.

The feast day was well attended, and while the Mass and sermon were proceeding in the crowded chapel dozens of men and women who could not get into the building, or who preferred not to try, remained outside. Many were simply standing about in groups, chatting; others were more significantly engaged. Some kneeled before the tree stump at whose foot many candles were burning; there, as at a shrine, they prayed. Were their prayers Catholic petitions to Saint Anthony or Vodun prayers to Damballa? At another corner of the church under the shade of a tree sat a venerable woman dispensing a liquid concoction, which seemed particularly popular with the women and children. Holding out their hands they received a palmful each of the syrupy substance, which they then smeared upon their bodies; on the eyes or face, on their legs, or on more private parts. The Catholic priest later explained the liquid as a "Voodoo brew," and again as a charm; more accurately, it was a garde to turn away illness from the parts of the body rubbed with it.

The officiating priest knew perfectly well that not all the candles burning at the tree stump were for Saint Anthony; he was also aware of the woman dispensing her liquid, yet took no steps to stop her. He assumed that with the small statue of Saint Anthony on the stump, there were already children growing up unaware of Damballa's connection with the place. He hoped to find money for a larger, more imposing statue so that as generations passed the memory of the loa, as related to worship on this hill, would be supplanted. As for the woman, why bother to drive her away? It would merely cause antagonism, and would certainly not stop the practice. Her being there might draw a few more peasants to the feast, where they would have an opportunity to learn the true Word.

As soon as the Mass in the chapel was finished, the people poured out and began to form a line of march. Headed by the priest the whole congregation, including many who had not penetrated to the

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798 chapel, wended their way down the hill and across to a clearing
796 among the trees. On the way many of the women stopped beside
the path to pluck a handful of long grass or reached up to break
● 177 twigs from the smaller trees. At the clearing, primitively decorated with colored cloth, the priest made a short discourse; then he intoned three times, "Notre Dame d'Alta Gracia," and the worshipers, raising their wisps of greenery above their heads, rustled the twigs until the air was filled with a sound like the hissing of many serpents. "*Priez pour nous!*" they responded each time to the rustling accompaniment. The Virgin of Alta Gracia is the miraculous saint of Higuey, as much renowned among Haitians as among the Spanish-speaking Dominicans farther east. The supplication to the Virgin is proper enough to a Catholic feast, but the hissing, reminiscent of Damballa, is an intimation that the Vodun loa is not yet forgotten on his holy hill.

This festival of Notre Dame d'Alta Gracia shows not only the adaptability of Catholicism to Vodun, but likewise that of Vodun to Catholicism. Not even with the will to preserve their faith and practice pure can most men resist the infiltration of surrounding beliefs; in Haiti, the will to resist is itself lacking. This the Church knows, and counts upon for ultimate victory. In other words, there is to be not precisely a conversion of worshipers away from Vodun, but a slow transformation of Vodun itself into a true Catholic faith within the hearts of the people.

In its long experience in adaptability, the Church has in many a country learned to establish a ground of common understanding with lowly folk, while keeping in touch with aristocrats. Following the principle that where a belief or rite is apparently ineradicable it is advisable to turn it to Catholic uses, the Church in Haiti has often made this kind of adjustment, just as in earlier times with the Aztecs, Mayans, and other continental American Indians. An example of it may be observed at Saut d'Eau, near Ville-Bonheur.

787 Here, near the centre of Haiti, in 1884 there appeared in a palm
778 tree the vision of a beautiful Virgin blessing the people. She re-
798 mained so long that according to tradition the whole countryside
saw her. The parish priest, unwilling to permit this obsession of the people to continue, came to drive away the apparition. The Virgin departed, apparently of her own will. People saw her no more, but many came to the palm tree and were miraculously cured and

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marvelously aided in distress. The priest, not willing to allow even 787
this "delusion," tried to cut down the tree but was wounded by his 778
own machete. Eventually, however, the tree was destroyed by 795
natural causes, and a church erected on the site. Fire destroyed the church. Each successive church building has likewise been destroyed, by fire or by lightning. No longer now does the Catholic Church combat the sanctity of Saut d'Eau: after all, it was the Virgin who appeared, not a loa. The great celebrations on every fifteenth of [796]
July draw pilgrims from all over Haiti. Although the Church now grudgingly approves the feast it is still recognizably Vodun in character, for devout souls who bathe in the water are "mounted" by loa. The Church has a hard battle ahead of it to win this festival for Catholicism.

Three factors work in favor of the Catholic struggle to win 771
Haitians completely away from Vodun: the world-wide organization 177
of the Church, which can always throw trained reserves into the 795
battle; the superior intellectual equipment of the priests, enabling them to plan their campaign and use psychological weapons; and [795]
the plasticity of Vodun itself, which is a conglomeration of human feelings, ideas, and traditions rather than a rigid sect with an inflexible ritual.[3] Even with these advantages, it is still the battle of a few dozen men on one side with the Haitian masses (more than two million) on the other. So far as one is ever justified in prophecy, it seems safe to assume that Vodun will continue to assimilate more and more fragments of Catholicism; that its appeal will remain so long as education and medicine are not extended to the whole countryside; that eventually—it may be centuries hence—Vodun rites may sink back into the status of living folklore, to which the simple turn in their deepest need.

One of the strongest missionary advantages of the Roman Catholic [795]
Church has been the breadth given it by two thousand years of [797]
experience. In so long a life it has had to be all things to all men; out of necessity it has developed around the central core so wide a variety of belief, doctrine, form, and traditional practice, that there is something for every believer, whether scholarly or untutored, powerfully important or humbly obscure. What the cultivated —10

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[3] The absence of any written formulation of Vodun must certainly be a factor in its lability. Recorded tradition and written history tend to create definiteness of pattern. [771]

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WHAT THE CULTIVATED

177/ member of the Haitian élite takes from Catholicism is quite different
177 probably from what the peasant absorbs: the point is that the peasant
[184] does not find the faith either incomprehensible, or uncongenial to his own tradition and penchants—as he might find the tenets of, say, Unitarianism or Presbyterianism. It is easy to fit the Trinity, the Virgin, the saints, the Mass, holy water, Lent, and practically every other external aspect of belief and ritual into his mental set. He makes his own selection and his own reconciliations. It seems the most natural thing in the world to him to light a candle and make the sign of the cross as he baptizes a new drum for use in the Vodun dance. The Haitian peasant, in fact, makes a tranquil unity of his two religions, to match the obvious oneness of his universe.

Any forms who possible psychological reasons is guesswork. It
461 might be hazarded that the men felt they had fought for freedom and so deserved to enjoy its benefits; or that agriculture smacked of the old days of slavery and should be avoided by the superior male; or that since ambition for progress was not a Haitian characteristic, and the work of women produced enough food, there was no reason to change a routine which did very well. One cannot speak with definiteness on these matters. And it was upper-class Haitians and foreigners who adjudged peasant men lazy; slaves and "forced" laborers always appear lazy to their masters.

462 In modern times at least, male peasants toil strenuously, although not so continuously as their females. The preparation of the ground for planting is hard work, and is done entirely by men. Harvesting, housebuilding, marketing the coffee (one form of marketing not beneath a man's dignity)—these are men's major contributions to economic life.

177 People who live in isolation commonly tend to slide back in such
178 externalities as clothes, manners, neatness of person and of dwelling, speech, and social ritual. Almost from the very beginning of Haitian history, most of the people were effectively isolated from the rest of the world, so that the superficial aspects of daily life exhibited to all visitors the spectacle of retrogression.

175 Christophe, who had frequent English visitors in his kingdom,
656 forced his subjects to dress neatly. After his time no ruler made
241 regulations for dress. The men commonly wore a pair of cotton trousers and an abbreviated shirt, while women's dress was a loose-fitting garment which might be called a Mother Hubbard. Children could, and can now, be seen up to the age of four or five without
[369] any clothes at all. The nearer the countrypeople live to towns, where the example of the élite is before them, the better their dress is likely to be.

342 Slave cabins on the former plantations were inhabited by the free Haitians until decay set in and the cabins fell down. They were ordinarily superseded by huts which could be constructed of withes and thatch. The British Minister during the eighteen-twenties saw a
[333] man near Plaisance building his house, "plastering the wattling, of which the walls were composed, with a mixture of mud and ashes," using his hand as a trowel.[18] Almost never did a hut have more than

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[18] Mackenzie, op. cit., I, 192.

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two rooms to house the whole family. "In these huts, filth and every 392
species of uncleanliness prevail, for the people give themselves up to [515]
their indolent and lazy habits. It is common to see the pigs and
poultry herding with the family."[19]

The furnishings in the huts were as simple as the construction. 352
Rarely was there more than one bed, if that; the children of the
family used mats for sleeping. A table, a stool, a couple of patched [415]
chairs, calabash bowls, an iron pot or two (and in later days, discarded gasoline tins), comprise the household equipment.

The fine roads of the French régime became rutted and washed, 653
were overgrown with weeds, and soon reverted to wasteland or 492
became nothing more than paths. Carriages ceased to be of any use, 443
and there were few wagons; donkeys and horses became the regular 401
means of transportation, and this was true until the Americans began
to build roads again in 1916. The colonial régime had left a legacy
of bridges, public buildings, parks, irrigation ditches; practically
every improvement of this nature crumbled in slow decay and was
not replaced. The temperate Dr. Brown closed his account of the 114
Haiti of 1836 with the following paragraph: 105

> To sum up all that might be said upon the actual condition of Hayti, poverty and degradation stare one in the face wherever he goes—and the state of the whole island will be fully understood in the United States when it is bluntly asserted, that the country is one continuous negro village, built of mud cabins, and unfurnished with the usual comforts of life. The population is, with small exceptions, an indolent, naked multitude, without sustenance or a disposition to make exertions to obtain it; without enormous vices, but petty and insignificant in every thing relating to human character, and not many removes from the tribes upon the Niger in point of civilization. The fact is indisputable, that as a nation the blacks of Saint Domingo are in a retrograde movement as regards intellectual improvement, and no obstacle seems to exist to prevent this descent to barbarism. The government and institutions of the country must for the present remain unstable, and it is difficult to pronounce what the changes involved in the future will produce.[20]

Progress, as Westerners understand it, comes through contacts and 177
competition, both of which were lacking to Haiti in large measure 178
throughout the whole of the nineteenth century. While externally

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[19] Franklin, op. cit., p. 396.

[20] Op. cit., II, 288–289.

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177 the country slowly became dilapidated, its economic and social institutions
178 were taking on the unplanned characteristics already described. The only disturbing element in Haitian life was that of political machinations by ambitious military men. When these reached a peak in 1915 the United States intervened. For the first time in a century, really, the Haitian came into contact with the outside world.

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[p. 234]

XIII

CONSTITUTIONS AND POLITICAL FORMS

369 QUITE aside from its castes and the political separation of
64 1807–20, Haiti has always consisted of two nations, one
living in and near the towns and so within reach of established
government, the other rural and yet capable of ordering its
own affairs by folk rules without much actual governmental machinery.
It is through the former that Haiti has a political history.
Indeed, one is tempted to say that more than half the people have
continually got along without any government whatever of a formal
sort, for being peaceably inclined they have found custom and usage
[669] sufficient for their needs. These people have been rarely disturbed by
the state's rulers; revolutionary chieftains alone have found it worth
their while to stir up the country folk to an active interest in politics.

631 The formal subdivisions of Haiti have been, through most of its
history, three: the *commune*, roughly corresponding to the American
● 177 township; the *arrondissement*, a group of communes, just as the
American county is a group of townships; and the *département*,
comprising several arrondissements. All three terms were borrowed
from France, although their significance was altered when applied
to the Haitian scene.

175 In the days of Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe, the government
24 had owned vast plantations which were under the control of
475 the military. Pétion and Boyer instituted the commune by combining
numerous estates and farms into a group likewise to be controlled
701 by soldiers. Until the American Occupation the police system of the
632 country was military, with ordinary soldiers keeping order and
making arrests when necessary. Since few people are less given to
disorder than the Haitian peasants, the task of keeping order was not
a serious one; indeed, soldiers were frequently stationed among their
friends and relatives, who never thought of them as police. It sometimes
[293] happened, however, that soldiers were assigned to other parts
of the country, where they swaggered about with their *cocomacaques*
(heavy-jointed canes), using these or the flat of their swords to
enforce their often arbitrary commands.

[illegible] In every commune recognized by the state was an important

692 public, or against any of the secretaries of state or other important
officials; but if this court was ever convoked, records of its actions
are lacking.[8]

The most important actually functioning court was that of Cassation. In American terminology this would be called the Court of Appeals, reviewing cases coming up from the civil and criminal courts of the important towns. It sat at Port-au-Prince, and consisted of fourteen judges appointed by the president and his cabinet.

● [177] Boyer had borrowed most of the forms of important Haitian
courts from France, but he could not transfer to his country the
spirit and tradition which made those courts function in France. The
High Court of Justice remained a mere plan; the national Court of
Cassation and the so-called department courts in the four to eight
large towns operated under close presidential scrutiny; only the juges
de paix, dealing with small and homely cases, had comparative
freedom.

175 It was generally acknowledged throughout the nineteenth century
695 that Haitian judges, whether of the Court of Cassation or of the
department courts, could be influenced by pecuniary and political
693 considerations. The odds were heavy in favor of any suitor who was
liberal in his bribes to the judges; "justice" could be bought, and
175 was. By French tradition of justice, the prisoner was assumed to be
693 guilty until he was proved innocent. In Haiti he was bullied, cajoled,
and cross-questioned in order to force a confession, and to make him
state in open court what he was said to have admitted in his preliminary
examination. Confessions were obtained by beatings, and
prisoners were occasionally even tortured to death.

175 Another characteristic of the nineteenth-century courts—and not
695 in Haiti alone—was the tardiness of their procedure. Consider the
civil case in one of the department courts. If a creditor instituted a
suit against a debtor in one department and obtained a favorable
verdict, the defendant was permitted to appeal from the sentence to
the court of an adjoining department, and so on in succession
throughout the whole series; if the last court confirmed the judgment
of the first, the defendant could then move it into the Court of

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[692] [8] This Supreme Court would, according to the constitution, be formed only by proclamation of the Senate (and therefore under the ultimate control of the president), and might not hold its sessions in a spot more than twelve leagues from the seat of the Senate. Consisting of fifteen judges to be chosen by lot from the tribunals of the five Haitian departments, a two-thirds majority would be necessary for conviction, and no appeal might be made from its decisions.

policy of encouraging trade with his friends and prohibiting it with 175
his enemies—both arbitrarily. The variation of Pétion was a sort of 439
mercantilism, with set high tariffs.

What Dessalines planned was in terms of Western statecraft so 175
weird that white onlookers felt they were restrained in calling Dessalines 177
a transplanted African tribal chieftain. So passionately intense 643
was the fury of that general against all whites that he took every 655
precaution he could devise to prevent face-to-face dealings between 466
his Haitians and foreigners. By deceit, treachery, and ingenious 439
cruelty he conducted a massacre which deserves comparison with
that of Saint Bartholomew: this effectively rid the country of white
residents. Since for a time Haiti would have to depend for economic [166]
survival upon trade with foreigners, Dessalines next conceived a [24]
project whereby the whole population would be gathered in the
centre of the island, in the most protected valleys and the gorges of
the highest mountains. In these fastnesses the people would never
see a white but would work on the land, producing sugar and coffee
and cotton for export without ever leaving their local habitations.
On the seacoast would be established certain "counters" over which
a few incorruptible Haitians, chosen by the Emperor himself, would
sell local products and buy the necessary imported goods. Impregnable [712]
fortresses were to guard access to the interior,[a] which would
be reached by new roads from the seacoast "counters." Every seaport [491]
was to be destroyed as soon as new towns could be built in the back [509]
country. Already when his death intervened Dessalines had moved [361]
his capital from the Cape (that is, Cap-Haïtien, formerly Cap
Français) to the inland village of Marchand (in the department of the
Artibonite; now renamed Dessalines), and his next plan was to
transfer Port-au-Prince eight leagues inland to the plantation
Dérance, among the mountains.

Dessalines has been thought absurd, childish, barbaric. But there is something poignant, even tragic, in this fiery determination of the black chieftain, bitter over the cruelties and indignity to which his people had been subject for decades, to use this alien island as best he could and preserve his people at any cost from such another domination.

Despite his scheme for ultimate isolation of the people, Dessalines 175
kept everyone steadily at work by the forced-labor system instituted 466
under Toussaint.

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[a] See p. 247 and note 23.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 Norman ones were less complicated; English, simpler still, reën-
192 forced the Norman tendency.

197 From the Spaniards of the Caribbean region Créole borrowed not only nouns (generally the most assimilable of words), but a large number of adjectives, pronouns, auxiliary verbs, and certain subtler characteristics of speech.

This amalgam, then, three quarters Norman French, was the
Créole language as of 1697 when France acquired Saint-Domingue,
when buccaneering became unprofitable, and many of the filibusters
settled down to begin a respectable life as plantation owners in the
5617 new colony. African slaves were soon imported to satisfy the demand
197 for labor. First a few, then thousands a year and increasing thousands,
were brought to Saint-Domingue. In all externalities, of which
192 language is one, slaves must yield up their old ways and take on new.
175 The question of interest here is to what extent the Negroes influenced
Créole, giving it an "African" character.

The answer, surprising at first, is that the Negro influence was almost negligible.

175 In the first place, Créole was now already a language with a rich
vocabulary, all the grammatical equipment, and the necessary regu-
177 larities. The slaves came to the colony from all parts of Africa, and
197 so with widely differing languages. Linguistic maps of Africa indi-
cate the presence of hundreds of dialects up and down the west coast;
tribes living fifteen miles apart spoke languages which, although
belonging to the same stock, were as different as Spanish and Italian
[191] from each other. Owing to the habit of dispersing the slaves, the
average Negro had no common basis of understanding with his
fellow slaves on the same plantation. Practically all white foremen
and overseers gave orders in Créole; this within one generation
became the *lingua franca* of the plantations, an economic necessity,
and socially indispensable.

In the second place, there was in Saint-Domingue no equivalent to the familiar objects of life in Africa. Trees, houses, earth there were, of course, but different kinds of trees, houses, and soil. Economic tasks were performed in a different manner with new techniques and organization. Every outward form of life was foreign to the African background. Even assuming that there had been a common Negro speech, it would have found little to attach itself to in the New World. It should be noted that Negroes likewise made few contribu-

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tions to the English language in the southern United States, where 177
they were slaves for seventy years longer than in Haiti. 197

Common African economic ways yielded to the plantation system
and slavery; the Negroes had no opportunity to govern themselves 175
or settle their own disputes; they mated rather than married; their 567
families might be broken up if the master wished to sell a slave. The one part of life in which they were permitted to follow unhindered their African ways was the intimate one of religion which, since it needed no buildings or organization, did not interfere with work, and could be entirely personal and private, was not suppressed. As has been pointed out, the Dahomean form of religion prevailed over all others and, modified, gained wide adherence among the slaves. It is precisely in Vodun that Créole has taken over its only important African words, such as Vodun, zombi, houngan, marassa, loa, boumfort, bocor, ouanga.

It would be erroneous to imply that the Negroes had no effect 175
upon the language of which they soon became the predominant 197
users.[6] Their operations were of a subtle sort, however. As with the 194
Negroes of the United States, the letter "r" proved difficult, and often disappeared altogether, leaving many words softly slurred. "Marcher," for example, generally sounds as if it were *ma'ché*. Likewise in the course of years they gave the language their own accent, their own modulation and tone, which make Créole sound different on their lips from a white man's way of speaking it. Some scholars attribute this to a *racial* influence—that is, to the morphology of the Negro throat and tongue. It might be pointed out to the contrary that Americans, white like the English, have given the mother tongue *their* own accent, modulation, and tone. It has certainly not yet been proved that race has anything to do with speech.

Words in imitation of a sound grow up in every language. Several 175
western African dialects, especially Mandingue, seemed fond of 192
onomatopoeia; in Haiti, consequently, one hears many an expressive additional word. Moreau de Saint-Méry[7] noticed this in colonial Saint-Domingue, citing such cases as the addition of "*bep*" to the verb "*tomber*," if one had fallen down lightly, or "*boum*" if heavily;

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[6] Suzanne Sylvain, *Le Créole haïtien* (Wetteren, Belgium, 1936), p. 10, says that although the African contribution to Haitian Créole is generally considered to be slight, she has personally found 170 words of undeniable African origin, and feels sure that there are many more. [174]

[7] *Description . . . de . . . Saint-Domingue*, II, 56–57.

114 the culture of their group, but also none of the broader aspects of the motivating forces, the dominant wishes, the attitudes and social values of the masses. Since the élite have often expressed in books their desires and frustrations, one feels that it would be readily possible for a trained social psychologist to learn much from upper-class informants who are anxious to be understood. To penetrate the inner life of the masses would be easier for an American than for a Haitian scholar, who would be enmeshed in the attitudes of class and caste in his own society.

565 Little has been said in this book of the small group of people, generally living in towns, who belong neither to the élite nor to the masses. How much actual social mobility occurs? Of the horizontal variety, that is, movement from place to place within the same social class, very little; of the vertical, or transition from one social class to another, there is likewise little, as has been shown at length in this book; yet there is enough to make a study of social mobility useful. Allied with such an investigation might be one of social distance. The degree of sympathy existing between élite and masses is small; on the other hand, one longs to know the degree of social distance of the individuals who are not yet élite but who regard themselves as definitely superior to the masses: what is their attitude toward the class they have left? And what is the attitude of the élite toward their aspirations?

114 Certain studies have already been made of the effect of the Vodum religion upon the personalities of its practitioners.[6] Even here the surface has been merely skimmed.

177 Haiti, because she is a colored nation in a white Western World, has been even more isolated than she would otherwise have been, even with her island position and her economic poverty. Except for the presence of American Marines for nineteen years there has been little cultural contact with outsiders, and hence little cultural conflict. [563] It is generally estimated that there are not more than three thousand white people living in Haiti, and these mostly in the capital city. Throughout the nineteenth century it is likely that there were fewer. Haiti shares the island with the Dominican Republic, yet since the independence of the Dominicans in 1844 there has been little warfare, travel, or contact between the two peoples. Haitian workers have crossed the border, it is true, and have returned home (or have

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[6] See particularly Price-Mars, *Ainsi parla l'oncle*, and Dorsainvil, *Vodou et névrose*.

177 been murdered, as in 1937); and the Dominican influence can be seen in northeastern Haiti. The country as a whole, however, remains largely free from non-Haitian influence. This isolation may not continue for many more years, for successive administrations expand their health activities, try to improve economic methods, extend transportation facilities, and pursue policies of "enlightenment." Under such a regimen there will be an inevitable contact either with the experts from foreign countries or with the products of the civilization of those countries. And if Haiti should acquire foreign machines in large numbers, she would inevitably open herself to the dynamic influences which accompany a changing economy.

177 Such a possibility is in the near future, so that social scientists will
105 shortly have the chance to observe cultural contact and diffusion at work. What is more immediately to the point is the query as to how much diffusion of cultural traits occurred at the beginning of Haitian national life. How much of the African tribal culture persisted through slavery and the period of forced labor into the Haiti of small properties and peasantry? How much, on the other hand, is a borrowing from the French ways of colonial times? These questions have been treated in earlier chapters, but may be here summarized. The external structure of social institutions, particularly those which characterize the life of the élite, is clearly French. Haitian government and law, upper-class marriage, the Catholic religion—all these have a French provenance. Conversely, among the masses, the Vodun religion and possibly certain economic devices (such as the coumbite) stem from Africa. Yet the round of daily life among the people is quite obviously unlike that of any single African group from which slaves were drawn, nor is it a composite of African folkways.[7] Similarly, although the bulk of the population is peasantry, the Haitian peasant is not at all a transplanted French peasant. The folkways and mores of rural Haiti are, to a degree unusual in most countries, products of local experience, uncolored by outside influence.[8]

157 Students of race find in writings about Haiti the usual sum of generalizations about the temperament and mental characteristics of

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567 [7] It must be emphasized that the Haitian slaves were drawn from at least thirty-eight African groups. See J. G. Leyburn, "The Making of a Black Nation," in G. P. Murdock, ed., *Essays in the Science of Society* (New Haven, 1937), pp. 377–394.

[8] Herskovits' theory of the African origin of certain Haitian traits has been discussed above, pp. 199–201.